STILL WATERS
FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT
REVIVAL BOOKS

Still Waters Revival Books

www.swrb.com (FREE BOOKS here too!)

Contact us today for your FREE mail order catalogue!

swrb@swrb.com • Fax 780-468-1096 • Phone 780-450-3730

4710-37A Ave., Edmonton, AB, Canada T6L 3T5

Reformation resources at great discounts!

FAITH no FANCY:

OR,

A Treatise of MENTAL IMAGES.

DISCOVERING

The vain *Philosophy* and vile *Divinity* of a late Pamphlet, intitled, *Mr. Robe's fourth Letter to Mr. Fisher*;

AND SHEWING,

That *an imaginary Idea of Christ as Man*, (when supposed to belong to saving Faith, whether in its Act or Object), imports nothing but Ignorance, Atheism, Idolatry, great Falshood, and gross Delusion.

By RALPH ERSKINE, *A. M.*
Minister of the Gospel at *Dunfermline*;

Who was very confidently, but very ignorantly, charged with BLASPHEMY and HERESY in the said Pamphlet, for condemning that imaginary Doctrine.

WITH

An APPENDIX, relating to Part of the late Writings of the Reverend Messrs. *Willison* and *Currie*, especially touching some Points of Gospel-doctrine, injured by their Defence of the Act of Assembly 1722, *&c.*

Nunquam periclitatur religio nisi inter Reverendissimos. LUTH.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by W. and T. RUDDIMANS; and sold by WILLIAM GRAY Bookbinder, in the *Grass-Market*, *Edinburgh*, and by other Booksellers in Town and Country.

MDCCXLV.

ERRATA.

PAG. 1. Line 15. for 34 read 31. P. 7. l. 13. f. iv. r. v. P. 17. l. 8. f. *differs* r. *differ*. P. 23. l. 18. *dele* a. l. 19. before *naked* insert *a*. P. 39. l. 5. f. 307 r. 207. P. 75. l. 2. r. *est* r. *&*. l. 6 put ; after body. P. 102. l. 12. r. *Cartesianarum*. P. 112. l. 21. f. 579. r. 379. P. 118. l. 5. before *loss* insert *the*. l. 22. f. *p.* 2. r. *p.* 3. P. 124. l. 7, 8. for *region* r. *religion*. P. 149. l. 18. f. *thirsts* r. *thrusts*. P. 150. l. 15. f. *ideas* r. *idea*. P. 164. l. 8. f. *incorporeal* r. *and corporeal*. P. 183. l. 5. f. *three* r. *three*. P. 184. l. 6. f. *for* r. *from*. P. 219. l. 2. in the notes, f. *natura non* ; r. *natura* ; *non*. P. 267. l. 17. f. *Lords's*, r. *Lord's*. P. 287. l. 40. f. *man's* r. *man*. P. 289. l. 28. *dele* of.

Added by SWRB from the 1805 Philadelphia edition

↓

TOGETHER WITH A

SERMON, titled, *The true Christ no New Christ*, and some other Extracts from the same author; with Mr. Filher's *Review of Cambuslang*, which have an immediate connection with the work, and were never before published with it.

Tyronibus

Philoſophiæ & Theologiæ

Studioſis,

MEDITATIONES

Dialecticè hîc magna ex parte propoſitas,

Quatenus contra inanes IDEARUM ſpeculationes, ambobus hiſce ſtudiis inimicas, medicamentum præbeant, & FIDEM à PHANTASIA omnimodè ſeparatam exhibeant,

Utpote VOBIS magè commodas,

Vobis operam offerre libens,

Dare & dicare

Arrogat

RODOLPHUS ARESKINUS.

THE

Principal CONTENTS.

THE dedication to ſtudents of philoſophy and divinity — viii
The preface ſhewing the occaſion, nature and deſign of this treatiſe — v
Appendix to the pamphlet, intitled, *Fraud and Falſhood diſcovered* — xvi
The general ſubject of the treatiſe reduced under eight heads — 1, &c.

CHAP. I.

Shewing the groſſneſs and danger of the imaginary doctrine advanced by Mr. *Robe* — 2
How Chriſt is preſent in the goſpel — 3
A ſummary of Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary doctrine, in his own words — 3, 4
SECT. I. An inquiry into the meaning of the terms, *idea*, and *imaginary idea*, with the ſentiments of philoſophers on that head — 5, &c.
SECT. II. An inquiry into the meaning of theſe words, *Chriſt as man*; or, in what ſenſe ſound divines uſe them — 11
That Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks of Chriſt as man in a ſenſe different from theirs, proven from his letter — 13, &c.
To ſpeak of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, and to think of him by the exerciſe of the ſame faculties and powers we think of other abſent men, and to make this belong to faith, as abſolutely neceſſary and helpful to it, proven to be abſurd and irreligious — 17, &c.

CHAP. II.

Treating of the glorious perſon of our Immanuel, God-man, and the myſterious conſtitution thereof, in order to ſhew, That the humanity therein ſubſiſting can be the object of faith only, not of fancy, or any imaginary idea — 24
Of the abuſe of natural reaſon and philoſophy in matters of divinity — 24, &c.
Of the glory of Chriſt's perſon, from *Col.* ii 9. — 26
The human nature of Chriſt ſhewn to be no perſon — 27
Of the myſterious union of the divine and human natures in one perſon, and how ſchoolmen and learned divines ſpeak upon this ſubject; with objections of adverſaries on this head anſwered at large — 27, &c.

CHAP. III.

Shewing the ignorance, error, idolatry, and atheiſm imported in the doctrine anent an *imaginary idea of Chriſt as man*; particularly the ignorance and error thereof — 42
Of the *error* and *ignorance* thereof — 43, &c.
Of the *idolatry* thereof — 48, &c.
Of the *Atheiſm* thereof — 52, &c.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP IV.

Shewing the abſurdity of that principle, *That an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man is helpful to the faith of his being God-man.* Where it is alſo ſhewn, by a number of examples, That no imaginary idea of any corporeal object can be helpful, either to the human or divine faith of any truth or propoſition whatſoever relating to that object; and that an imaginary idea is in itſelf no part of rational knowledge 57, &c.

CHAP. V.

Containing particular remarks upon all the parts of Mr. *Robe*'s fourth letter to Mr. *Fiſher*, relating to this ſubject, and in ſo far as Mr. *Erſkine*'s doctrine was impugned, and charged with herely and blaſphemy 82

SECT. I. That an imaginary idea belongs neither to knowledge nor faith, but is a deluſive, vain notion, &c. 83

SECT. II. That this term, applied to the conceiving of Chriſt to be true and real man, agrees neither with *philoſophy* nor *divinity* 90

SECT. III. An inquiry into that philoſophical rule, *Oportet intelligentem phantaſmata ſpeculari* 97

Of *Epicurus* and *Ariſtotle* their different philoſophy about the ſouls of men 98

The mind of later philoſophers, particularly *Hiereboord* and *De Vries*, in oppoſition to that maxim, when ſuppoſed to relate to any object of faith 100, 101

The teſtimony of *Aquinas*, *Howe*, and others, adduced by *Flavel* againſt Mr. *Robe*'s rule 103

An inquiry into ſome philoſophical maxims concerning ſenſes and phantaſms 105

Some of Mr. *Locke*'s philoſophy examined 114

SECT. IV. Shewing to how little purpoſe *Rutherford*, *Charnock* and *Durham* are cited as favourers of the doctrine of imaginary ideas, and how much they ſtand oppoſite to it, &c. 129

SECT. V. Shewing how *Popiſh* images are furthered and foſtered by *mental* images of Chriſt as man 141

A direct proof, that an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, leads men off from *the true Chriſt in the word, to a falſe Chriſt in the imagination* 143

An examination of that groſs poſition, That the laſt of theſe is as true a Chriſt as Chriſt in the word 146

An imaginary idea of the human nature of the lovely Jeſus, examined 150

Mr. *Robe* chargeable with making imaginary ideas have ſpiritual objects 152

SECT. VI. That the image of Chriſt's human nature cannot be drawn outwardly or inwardly, as an object of faith or worſhip, without being an idolatrous picture 154

That Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of Chriſt, preſenting to the underſtanding the figure of a croſs, is no better than a *Popiſh* crucifix, but worſe 158

What a myſtery of iniquity is in this mental idolatry 161

Iſaac Ambroſe and *Charnock* cited in vain to ſupport this *ib.*

SECT.

CONTENTS.

SECT. VII. The knowledge of Christ in his human nature, and an imaginary idea of it, distinct things 163

Mr. *Robe*'s charge of heresy and blasphemy considered and confuted, and that even by the words of *Charnock* which he cites 166

SECT. VIII. Christ's human nature as it is an object of sense, distinguished from it as it is an object of faith 172

They that saw Christ in the flesh, yet not by faith, saw not the object of faith, but of sense 173

How absurd it is to speak of Christ's human body as a part of the Mediator God-man 176

1 *Cor.* ii. 14. defended 180

Objects of sense and fancy are not as such the objects of faith, nor can be so 181

SECT. IX. *John* xx. 27. explained 183

An imaginary idea of flesh is a carnal idea 185

It can give no help to the belief of this, That *the Word was made flesh* 187

That we may think of Christ as man without thinking of him as God, and yet think on the true Christ, considered and confuted 188

That where the imaginary idea ends the understanding proceeds, considered and discarded 191

That an imaginary idea of Christ as man leads to the error of *Marcion*, who denied the verity of Christ's human nature 192

An imaginary idea is without understanding 195

The simile drawn from the imaginary idea of a body, as helpful to the idea of a whole man soul and body, considered and confuted, as not applicable to the subject in hand, first, in a theological, and then in a philosophical way 198

The conception of what we believe considered, and the blind implicit faith of the *Papists* 203

That an imaginary idea of Christ as man is unbelief, proven 205

SECT. X. *John* vi. 63. *The flesh profiteth nothing*, explained, and applied to an imaginary idea of Christ as man. The explication vindicated by a number of authorities, from the charge of blasphemy: particularly here are cited *Collings*, *Sharp*, *Wilson*, *Augustine*, *Beza*, *Calvin*, *Marlorat*, *Ravenell*, *Hutchinson*, *Sedgwick*, &c. 209

The imaginary idea of Christ's pierced side, and blood and water issuing thence, considered 217

That we may conceive of Christ as man, and yet conceive of him as God-man, the former being supposed to be a part of the conception of the latter, considered and confuted 218

The absence or distance of Christ's human nature makes no alteration of faith's object 221

Of the vision of Christ's human body in heaven 222

Heb. x. 39. and *Rom* iv. 20. vindicated 223

SECT. XI. The two scriptures, *Col.* ii. 8. and *Jer.* iv. 14. the one relating to *vain philosophy*, the other to *vain thoughts*, explained, and vindicated as they are applied to imaginary ideas 223

John xx. 17. *Touch me not*, explained at large, and the explication vindicated, by authorities, from the false notion of Christ's bodily presence as the object of faith 225

An imaginary idea no part of Christian knowledge 229

That our senses and imagination are helpful to the knowledge of God, considered and confuted. *Pascal* and Dr. *Owen* cited on this head

head 230
That the saving knowledge of God comes by the intervention of our senses and imagination, considered and examined 231
Rom. i. 20. illustrated 232
The knowledge, *that* God is, and *what* he is, distinguished *ib.*
The argument drawn from the subserviency of the senses and imaginations to their helpfulness, considered and confuted 238
SECT. XII. *Burgess* cited in vain by Mr. *Robe* to prove his point 241
That the intervention and subserviency of things, will not prove their helpfulness to the knowledge of God, demonstrated *ib.*
The words of *Manton* cited by Mr. *Robe* in favours of fancy, examined 244
His citations from *Charnock* examined 248
That senses and imaginations are hinderances, instead of helps, to the knowledge of God, proven 250
SECT. XIII. Whether men would know God better were they deaf and blind, and destitute of bodily senses and imaginations, considered at large, and cleared from the imputation of absurdities, with which Mr. *Robe*'s principles on this head are proven to be chargeable, *&c.* 253
SECT. XIV. The imaginary ideas of corporeal objects or visible things, as the first inlet and help to spiritual knowledge, considered and discarded 261
How far the senses are allowed to be useful and necessary to the knowledge of things within their sphere 265
Marches red between the extremes of *Scepticism* and *Epicurism* *ib.*
That the *Cartesian* arguments for proving their innate ideas, prove not their point, but prove man's natural innate knowledge 271, 2
Adams's first knowledge of God shewed to be not by viewing God in the creature 273
Innate knowledge necessarily previous to acquired 275
Our first knowledge of God, whether natural or gracious, shewed not to be by our senses and imaginations, nor by viewing creatures, but another way opened and discoursed upon 278
The image of God in man the root of all human understanding 282
The first lesson that God teacheth, is God himself 285

CHAP. VI.

Shewing in what respects the human nature of Christ is the object of faith, so as it cannot be the object of any imaginary idea 287
Where is considered,
1. How the human nature of Christ cannot be the object of faith as it is the object of an imaginary idea 288
How the Bible is, doctrinally considered, a rule and object of faith; but, materially considered, an object of sense, and an idol *ib.*
How the human nature of Christ is not the object of faith 290
The schoolmen of the church of *Rome* their reasons for making an image of Christ 292
Further arguments from reason even against mental images of Christ 293
2. How the human nature of Christ is the object of faith in two general, and ten particular respects 294
Nothing, person, or subject, can properly be the objects of faith, without supposing a predicate, or something declared anent that

that thing or perſon 294
The human nature of Chriſt, the object of faith,
1. In all theſe reſpects wherein there is any report or record of it in ſcripture 295
2. In all theſe reſpects wherein the inviſible God is to be ſeen in it 296
No profitable view of Chriſt's humanity, without ſeeing his divinity, which cannot be ſeen by fancy 311

CHAP. VII.

Authorities adduced on this ſubject, conſidered under two heads 312
I. As a point of divinity. The ſentiments of a number of divines in oppoſition to mental imagery 312, &c.
II. As it is a point of philoſophy. A philoſophical demonſtration of the direct falſhood and fallacy of Mr. *Robe*'s leading poſition, *That none can believe in the perſon God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man*; or, A diſcovery of the direct ſophiſtry hereof, by applying it to ſome philoſophical rules of the ſchools 338, &c.
Things true in a natural may be falſe in a moral ſenſe 342
The ſoul can *act* now without the body though in a ſtate of union with the body, as well as *live* afterward in a ſeparate ſtate without the body 343
Whatever nighneſs of union or contiguity there is between acts of faith, and acts of ſenſe or imagination; yet there can be no nighneſs of communion between them, but a contrariety 344
A ſcriptural argument for proving, That right thoughts of Chriſt come not by the help of external ſenſes, or internal imaginations, viewing external objects 347

CHAP. VIII.

Remarks upon ſeveral bitter and virulent paſſages of Mr. *Robe*'s letter relating
I. To SCHISM, with which he charges the Aſſociate Presbytery 349
II. To DEISM, from which he ſeems unable to purge himſelf or his author 351
Where in regard it was alledged, That though the ſcripture be called the great ſtanding, infallible, ſufficient rule of faith and life to us; yet, when it is not alſo deſigned the *only* rule, this favours of a DEISTICAL ſpirit *ib.*
A publick challenge being given to prove this, or be reputed a ſlanderer and falſe accuſer of the brethren, this challenge accepted, and proofs given 356
With remarks upon a ridiculous retortion of the above argument 360
Poſtſcript 365
Addenda. *Turretine* vindicated from the errors Mr. *Robe*'s gloſs of his words would palm upon him 367

THE

THE PREFACE.

Shewing the Occaſion, Nature and Deſign of the following Treatiſe.

I Acknowledge the ſubject I am now called in providence to treat, is very myſterious, ſpeculative and ſublime, in ſo far as it relates to that glorious object of faith, an INCARNATE GOD, or God in our nature; which is one of the higheſt ſubjects of divinity, and which I am obliged to handle in oppoſition to what my opponent calls *an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man.* Which idea neither belongs to any branch of ſolid philoſophy nor ſound divinity, nor hath it any concern with true religion; and, in ſo far as it hath nothing of the divinity of Chriſt, nor of his Godhead and perſonality in it, can lead no ſoul toward the proper object of divine adoration. The ſubject therefore occaſions my thoughts to leap from a very great height to a very great depth, and, as it were, from one ſphere to another; and ſo, up and down by turns, from that wherein faith and ſpiritual underſtanding moves, in order to ſee God in our nature, and ſpiritual objects, to that wherein ſenſe, fancy and imagination moves, and can ſee nothing but a mere man, or a corporeal object.

The author I have to do with, ſeems, as will appear in our progreſs, very much diſpoſed to extenuate the errors and corruptions of this church, which the Aſſociate Preſbytery give teſtimony againſt. But, if, among other things, the ſupreme Godhead and proper Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as God equal with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, when it was openly attacked, was not

duly witneſſed for in the judicatures, there may be reaſon to fear, that the diſhonours done to the Mediator in his Deity, as well as in his other Royal prerogatives as King in *Zion*, may have provoked God to leave many of this generation to follow divers and ſtrange doctrines, and to give them up to ſtrong deluſions and vain imaginations. Of which one of the moſt groſs and dangerous is the *imaginary idea of Chriſt as man:* which is a conception including, at the utmoſt extent of it, no other view of him but merely in his humanity. God hath given us the glaſs of his *word*, where, if he alſo give us the eye of faith, we may ſee Chriſt, our incarnate God. Mr. *Robe* hath told us of another glaſs, namely, that of an *imaginary idea*, wherein we can only ſee him as man. And, whether this is helpful to the other, is part of the inquiry I am to make in the following treatiſe. Mr. *Robe*, in the title, and in the ſecond page of his letter, undertakes to diſcover the fraud and falſhood of the *Appendix* of my letter, intitled, *Fraud and Falſhood diſcovered*. How he hath managed this undertaking, the ſequel may evidence. Only, if he found out in that *Appendix* ſomething of yet greater conſequence than *fraud* and *falſhood*, and had he been very ſure and confident that there was *hereſy* and *blaſphemy* vented therein, then I think theſe would have deſerved a room in capital letters on the title-page, that all readers might be alarmed, and ſtirred up to ſearch into, and avoid the hereſy and blaſphemy which he is pleaſed to diſtinguiſh with capital letters elſewhere in this performance of his, namely, *That the human nature of Chriſt is no part of the object of faith*; and, *that it profiteth nothing*, p. 73. and again, p. 47. *That the human nature of the glorious Redeemer is no part of the object of faith.* The charge ſeems very high, eſpecially if, as he alledges, I have in terms aſſerted the above poſitions. But I hope to ſhew, that he hath quite failed in his proof; and that, inſtead of finding out *hereſy* and *blaſphemy*, he hath fallen into the mire of *groſs idolatry*, making ſome other thing than the living and true God, the proper object of faith and worſhip. It is my

my province at preſent, not only to defend myſelf againſt his falſe charge, but eſpecially to clear and vindicate the truth which he hath darkened and perverted. I declared my reſolution, when I wrote and publiſhed that letter, intitled, *Fraud and Falſhood diſcovered*, never to contend for the *laſt word*, but only for the *truth*: and therefore it was, that, though, after the publication thereof, I ſaw a letter of Mr. *Webſter*'s, directed to me, written with ſo much haſte and diſpatch, as ſeemed to import a vain ambition to have it bear the name of a *ready anſwer*; yet I gave no reply thereto, not only becauſe that letter was no anſwer to mine, almoſt in any part, except the title-page of it, which happened to be adverti ſed by the printer, for certain reaſons of his, five or ſix weeks before the book itſelf was publiſhed; which gave Mr. *Webſter* ſufficient time for moſt of his animadverſions; ſo that there was little occaſion for ſuch boaſting as appeared therein of the quick production thereof: but alſo I gave no return to it, becauſe, while the whole ſubſtance of my pamphlet ſtood unanſwered thereby, I had nothing to give a return to, but partly ſome groſs miſrepreſentations of facts, which it was little matter whether any believed to be true or not; and partly ſome flights of idle banter, which deſerved no moment of any man's precious time to write upon, nor would well become the gravity of a Miniſter to employ his time and pen about; while alſo any thing there objected, that ſeemingly deſerved conſideration, was obviated evidently in my pamphlet, ſo as any that pleaſed to read it again, might ſee his letter anſwered; and eſpecially, while no article of divine truth, nor, conſequently, the glory of God, was immediately concerned therein. But, now that I find Mr. *Robe* hath not only made himſelf a falſe witneſs againſt me, which I think I ſhould eaſily bear with, when I know I have truth on my ſide, and, conſequently, am reproached for the name of Chriſt; but when his bold and ignorant attack upon me imports in it what ought to be of far greater concern, even a bearing falſe witneſs againſt God, and his truth as it is in Jeſus: therefore I judge the glory of

God, and the credit of truth, require, that I ſet this matter in a clearer light. And, ſince providence hath put this work in my hand, I undertake it, not ſo much for the ſake of divines, or the learned that are well ſeen in divinity; among whoſe hands I could freely let Mr. *Robe*'s letter paſs without any anſwer, becauſe my very words, as they ſtand cited by him, will anſwer for themſelves, to any intelligent perſon that underſtands divinity; but rather for the ſake of the more inadvertent and inconſiderate, that may be ready to have their minds corrupted by ſuch ſtrange doctrine, as that of *an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man*, as if that belonged any way to the faith of this great myſtery of godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the fleſh*; which lies not within the ſphere of imagination. The ſubject therefore I am to treat, however intricate, yet may be very profitable, and of the greateſt conſequence for time and eternity, as it relates to ſaving faith, in oppoſition to deluſive fancy and imaginary notions.

As to that part of the title of this book, *viz. A treatiſe of mental images*, I hope the learned reader will not miſtake the meaning, by ſuppoſing me to think, that images were *ſubjectively* in the mind or underſtanding; which I own is not properly the ſeat thereof: but I call them mental *objectively*, as they are preſented by the imagination to the mind; and ſo by *mental* underſtand no more but *internal* images, as diſtinguiſhed from *external*, and conſequently much of the ſame import with *fancies*, in the former part of the title, *viz. Faith no fancy*; both which are internal. Yet I choſe to call them *mental*, rather than *internal* images; becauſe as the mind is the proper ſeat of faith, ſo theſe images are eſpecially hurtful and oppoſite to faith, as they are mental, or as they operate upon, diſturb, diſtract and darken the mind, diverting it, with theſe imaginary pictures, from viewing and fixing upon the proper object of faith.

I hope thoſe who have been the ordinary readers of ſome other writings that have come from my hand, will not be offended, but will excuſe me, that in this work I have been obliged to go much out of my ordinary road of writing

writing only upon divinity, now to treat it with a greater mixture of philoſophy, than I have formerly accuſtomed myſelf unto. And, ſince I do not expect that all my readers will be philoſophers, (though yet I would by this treatiſe deſire to fence them againſt vain philoſophy), I am ſufficiently aware, that, though I have ſtudied as plain, homely and intelligible language as I could; yet the nature of the ſubject is ſuch, that I fear much of it will be above the capacity of the vulgar; and that it is only thoſe that are knowing and judicious that will be moſt edified by ſome parts of this performance, if the Lord bleſs it to them. The reaſon is, becauſe not only is the matter in hand a very high and myſterious point of divinity, but Mr. *Robe*'s poſitions about it lead to conſider it with relation to the concern he thinks our natural ſenſes, ideas and imaginations have therein: which neceſſarily obliges me to uſe ſome ſcholaſtick terms, philoſophical arguments, and metaphyſical diſtinctions. Theſe I own are much out of vogue and faſhion, among many in our preſent time. But, though indeed the abuſe of them hath led men to much vanity, error and wickedneſs; yet the right uſe of them is ſometimes exceeding neceſſary even in divinity, eſpecially controverſial. Many that have profeſſed no great liking to philoſophical and metaphyſical reaſonings, have yet found themſelves obliged to make uſe of them, in order to expoſe the ſubtil and ſophiſtical arguments of hereticks. I find Mr. *Locke* himſelf ſometimes forming ſyllogiſms in his treatiſe of *human underſtanding*. Even though he decries the ſyllogiſtical way of reaſoning in that ſame book; yet he calls it *the art of fencing with the little knowledge we have*. The learned Profeſſor of philoſophy *Heereboord*, *diſp. p.* 222. ſhews, in ſeveral particulars, the uſefulneſs of that part of philoſophy called *metaphyſicks*, particularly in theology; and ſhuts up his diſcourſe upon that head, by obſerving, that even thoſe who diſapprove and condemn metaphyſicks, among whom he mentions the learned *Ameſius*, do yet very ſkilfully make uſe of them, when the preſſing objections of adverſaries require it, and alſo on other occaſions: which (ſays

(fays he) is a clear document and evidence, that metaphyſicks are exceeding neceſſary for a divine. To this purpoſe the learned *Davenant*, *in Col.* ii. 8. in many caſes illuſtrates the great advantage and uſefulneſs of philoſophy, and the art of right reaſoning, in the matters of faith and religion. Though we believe above reaſon; yet we do ſo neither raſhly nor unreaſonably. *Maccovii reg. theol. & philoſ. p.* 21. 22. *Verum cum vero non pugnat, &c. Ratio ſana non pugnat cum theologia: ſana dicimus, nam corrupta pugnat, &c. Ratio requiritur ad theologiam, non ut* argumentum, *ſed ut* inſtrumentum, *&c.* The truth of divinity and the truth of philoſophy are not oppoſite, though they be diſtinct. For example: Philoſophy teaches, that *a virgin cannot bring forth a child*; and indeed in a natural way this is true. Divinity teaches, *that a virgin can bring forth a child ſupernaturally*; and this alſo is true. Theſe truths are not the ſame, but diſtinct; yet they are not oppoſite. Thus ſound reaſon is not oppoſite to religion, though corrupt reaſon is. Reaſon is neceſſary in divinity, not as an *argument*, but an *inſtrument*: that is, not for proving any divine myſtery by reaſon, but for underſtanding divine things, it is requiſite we have reaſon; for neither infants nor idiots can learn divinity. The Reverend Mr. *Alexander Webſter*, who, in the foreſaid letter, was pleaſed, by way of taunt, to call my work in the foreſaid pamphlet, *a compleat ſyſtem of metaphyſicks*, may find more reaſon, if he pleaſe, to deſign this treatiſe by that name. But, if he intended, by ſuch a gibe, to ridicule that part of philoſophy, which yet men of the greateſt learning and renown, both in this and former ages, have intitled, *ſcientia catholica, an univerſal ſcience*, (treating though both of corporeal and ſpiritual things, yet in a way tranſcending the nature of all corporeal things as ſuch; which none I think will deliberately deride, that are not ſunk into earth and fleſh): then I may ſay of all ſuch taunts, as *Ovid* ſaid in another caſe,

Derident ſtolidi verba Latina Getæ.

The

The work, reader, you are here presented with, being *(opus otii)* composed at spare hours, that it might not interfere with, nor hinder my other necessary business, has therefore not only been the longer upon my hand, but must, on that account, be supposed to contain several repetitions of the same subject. Yet I have taken what care time allowed me to purge it of needless repetitions. And where the many repetitions in my opponent's tract, led me also to repeat his arguments anew; yet I endeavour to answer the same thing, not still the same way, but under different considerations and enlargements, or by different examples and illustrations.

If the titles of *vain philosophy*, and *vile divinity* I have given to the pamphlet animadverted upon, seem harsh to some, two things, I think, may be said for it. One is this, That as philosophy abused to introduce false and fallacious reasonings in religion, is in scripture called *vain*, *Col.* ii. 8. so divinity (considered as a *science* distinct from that, but) corrupted, and taught so as to give admittance to inward or outward imagery and idolatry in religious worship, or to dead images and idols, which in scripture are called *detestable and abominable things*, Jer. xvi. 18. may not unfitly be called *vile*. Another thing I would say, if these titles seem to be a hard reflexion upon the author, this is what I cannot well help: but I have not ascribed them directly to the author himself, but his work; because I would fain hope better things of him, and that he hath acted therein, not like himself, or a divine, but through present temptations being hurried into a strain of language, and way of expression, which, when he comes to himself, he will not justify, but condemn. If he proudly disdain to be corrected by one whom he has already represented in such an odious manner, as chargeable with *heresy* and *blasphemy*, he will perhaps but add, to his former errors, the guilt of despising the means of conviction. However, though this should be the case, yet my design in this work will not be lost, if it serve for a caution to others against the dangerous tendency of so many gross and erroneous positions,

tions, as are advanced in the pamphlet I here offer remarks upon. I intend not to remark upon the whole, but especially what relates to myself, and the attack made upon my doctrine respecting faith, in opposition to fancy. A great part of the pamphlet concerns my brother Mr. *Fisher*; who, if he had leisure, and thought it worth his while, is able enough to answer the violent and virulent attacks Mr. *Robe* makes upon him, even though boasted of, as he does likewise of some of Mr. *Currie*'s performances, as if there were *no answering* of them. But, if he think some writings, because *unanswered*, to be *unanswerable*, he but pleases himself with his own *imaginary* ideas. But so will none whose thoughts are *solid*, and under the government of *reason* and *judgment*.

If what I wrote formerly, and in the *Appendix* here reprinted, had not met with a prejudiced mind, I cannot see how any could have found such gross error therein, as Mr. *Robe* pretends to do. But, as he is the *first* that hath charged me with heterodoxy, so none will judge it, I suppose, out of my way to examine, whether he hath truly found it or not; and whether he hath therein bewrayed his own ignorance and error. When I insinuated in my letter, that, according to my information, they were not all sound divines that were the instruments and promoters of the work at *Cambuslang*, I had no such clear view that Mr. *Robe* was of that number. But now indeed I cannot see how to exclude him: for, if I mistake not, unless I could suppose that many things he hath here advanced, are merely *disputandi gratiâ*, or only the rash eruptions of resentment, and not his stated judgment, I cannot vindicate him from heterodoxy and idolatry both, relating to the human nature of our glorious Redeemer. And, though I am willing to suppose in charity that the former is the case, yet I do not see any such charitable supposition he expresses towards me in his whole book: which may shew how much he is under the conduct of his own spirit, or a worse, at present, when he adventures to spread among the common people, that I have vented *heresy* and *blasphemy* on this subject, and that *in terms*, without

without ſuppoſing that I may have any ſound meaning in my words, and without being ſo fair and candid as either to notify that the charge is in his own words or terms, and not mine; or to ſignify, that my words might admit of the conſequence he thus deduces from them. But, when he inferred from them ſuch a dreadful charge as it is impoſſible to invent words more bloody and bitter than thoſe that denominate one an *heretick* and a *blaſphemer*, I can hardly think it poſſible, that he was ſo void of underſtanding, as truly to believe what he wrote; and ſo void of common ſenſe and philoſophy, as to deduce ſuch concluſions where there were no premiſſes to found them upon, as I am to make appear. It is certainly a great fault for any to put his own forced comment upon his adverſary's words, and, when he hath made it as groſs as he can, then to argue againſt it as his adverſary's opinion. This is what Mr. *Robe* complains is done againſt him, *p.* 3. of his letter. But, if ever a man did practiſe what he condemns, Mr. *Robe* hath done ſo, by racking his invention to ſupport his deluſive dreams, fancies and imaginations relating to the human nature of Chriſt, and aſſerting, that I deny *Chriſt's human nature to belong to the object of faith*, becauſe I refuſe that Mr. *Robe's* imaginary notion of it belongs to that object: that is, becauſe I will not allow the *ideal fancy* of it in the brain to belong to the *real faith* of it in the heart, therefore his abſurd and monſtrous inference is, That I deny it to be the object of faith. And, becauſe I aſſert, that that fancy or imaginary idea of Chriſt's humanity is but an unprofitable and vain imagination, hence he infers, that I aſſert in terms, *That Chriſt's human nature is unprofitable*. In this manner I am to ſhew how much needleſs pains he hath put himſelf unto, to find out hereſy and blaſphemy, where he would never have dreamed there was any ſuch thing, if he had not conceived me to be his antagoniſt, and if he had not been ſo much drowned in the depth of deluſion, as to confound faith with fancy, and real ſupernatural and profitable knowledge with ideal, natural and vain imaginary notions. I doubt not but I

have indeed inferred many things from Mr. *Robe*'s ſtrange doctrine, which he may ſuppoſe he never thought of: but, if they are neceſſary conſequences of, and natively deducible from his new doctrine, I cannot help charging it therewith. Yea, the doctor cannot be quite innocent, whoſe doctrine is juſtly chargeable with ſupporting even the errors he profeſſes to diſclaim, becauſe he ought to ſee ſuch conſequences, and guard againſt them. Which they cannot be thought to do, who bring in new words into divinity, which frequently have new opinions lurking under them, according to the known maxim, *Qui fingit nova verba, ſimul nova dogmata fingit.* Such a new term in divinity is that of *an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man.* What new and odd doctrines are plainly implied in it, and deducible from it, may appear in the following treatiſe.

As the doctrine of imaginary ideas, in my judgment, belongs not at all to *theology*; ſo, if I have advanced any thing new, or unthought of by others before me, upon it, I know not. But I think every man has a liberty to give his mind and opinion, when called to it, upon any point of philoſophy, that does not contradict ſome point of divinity. Which if it do, he ought to take no liberty to admit it into religion, but rather ought to oppoſe the introduction thereof; which is part of my preſent work: wherein as oft as I give my judgment, I do it not without giving a reaſon for it; and, if it be in any matter wherein philoſophers differ among themſelves, my differing from ſome of them is therefore inevitable. However, my opponent, by declaring pointedly, that his imaginary idea can have no other object but what is merely corporeal, has made my work the more eaſy in determining that it cannot belong properly to the act or object of faith, *which is the evidence of things not yet ſeen:* yet this ſubject is ſo new and ſtrange, (I knowing no divine that hath directly treated it), and the expreſſions Mr. *Robe* hath upon it, are ſo many and various, that I am obliged to enlarge and extend my diſcourſe upon it to a more than ordinary length, that ſo I may endeavour to ſhut all the doors he hath opened for his doctrine of natural ſenſes and imaginary

imaginary ideas, by which he would bring it forth, and make it set up its head among spiritual subjects, as if it were agreeable or had any conformity to the doctrine of revealed religion: while to me this doctrine of his appears disagreeable, yea and disgraceful to human reason and judgment, and much more opposite to divine faith, and the glorious gospel of Christ.

Mr. *Robe*'s pamphlet was published about the end of *August*, *anno* 1743. This book in answer to it, though it took some time and leisure, as I have said, was written and might have been published *anno* 1744. Which I mention, that the reader may not impute it to me, that the work has been kept so long from his view: which is owing to such as were intrusted with it, and thought fit to publish the title-page, with proposals for the printing of it; which yet was afterward managed without that ceremony.

Mr. *Robe* refers so frequently to my words in the *Appendix* of the foresaid pamphlet, that it seems necessary the reader have it in his eye; and therefore I have thought fit it be here inserted.

APPENDIX to the Pamphlet, intitled, Fraud and Falshood discovered, *published* anno 1743.

Reverend dear Brother,

HAD you not earnestly desired my thoughts and remarks upon Mr. *Webster*'s postscript, I was disposed to neglect and undervalue it, among the rest of the publick tashes, calumnies and reproaches cast upon me and my brethren; believing the Lord will in due time wipe them away, when the wrath of man, and even the *rabies cleri*, shall praise him: he sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters; he rules the raging of the sea, when the waves thereof arise, he stilleth them. However, knowing that no man but myself was capable to clear the facts which I have opened up, relating to the foresaid correspondence,

I thought the glory of God, and the credit of truth, obliged me to anſwer your deſire; and the rather that I ſee alſo, what a mighty advantage the promoters of this work think they have gained, even by that fraudulent copy of my letter publiſhed by Mr. *Webſter*. Mr. *Robe* calls it my memorable letter to Mr. *Weſley*, a Miniſter of the church of *England*; and, ſince I began to write this letter to you, I ſee that copy taken out of Mr. *Webſter*'s poſtſcript, and reprinted at *Glaſgow* by itſelf, with his notes. In the title-page of that copy it is called a letter of mine, ſhewing, that ſtrugglings and outcryings, ſo as to drown the Miniſter's voice, *&c.* are very conſiſtent with a work of the Spirit of God. Alas! what is this they are boaſting of? And what have they found in my letter for themſelves, or againſt me? What is called ſtruggling as in the agonies of death in Mr. *Weſley*'s letter to me, is plainly aſcribed to the devil in my letter to him. What they call outcryings, ſo as to drown the Miniſter's voice, is in my letter to him judged to be the noiſy part that is acted eſpecially by thoſe that are neither ſolid nor judicious; and hence I ſeldom ever heard any ſuch clamorous noiſe in time of publick worſhip, without giving a publick check to it. Mean time, for as unbiaſſed as my deliberate ſentiments are ſuppoſed to have been when I wrote that letter, if I had been writing it yeſterday, I could hardly have told my ſentiments more plainly, in oppoſition to theſe very things wherein they judge they had me upon their ſide.

I ſee myſelf deſigned in the title-page of that foreſaid copy, *Miniſter of the Aſſociate Congregation at Dunfermline*; and I am ready to apprehend that an enemy hath done it: for it is eaſy to ſee, that as this way of deſigning me, imports a denying of my ſtanding paſtoral relation to the whole of this pariſh, and thus a juſtifying the violent meaſures that have brought about this Aſſociate ſituation; ſo, how rank it ſmells of a ſinful compliance with the defections of the day, and how much it tends to harden ſome in their neglect and contempt of the only lawful and ſettled miniſtry they have in this place, is eaſy

to

to demonſtrate. But, alas! many that would be thought friends to a reformation-work, are lifting up hammers and axes againſt it, when they do not know or conſider they are doing ſo. 'Tis true, they pretend they are only ſet againſt the *way* and *manner* wherein we manage our appearance for reformation: but, till once they put hand to the ſame work in another or a better way and manner, they give evidence, that it is the *cauſe itſelf*, and not *our manner* of witneſſing for it they oppoſe. 'Tis eaſy to ſee how Mr. *Webſter* and others write of Chriſt's Kingly office and government, in ſuch a general ſtrain, as would agree as much with the principles of looſe Sectarians, as of true and ſtrict Preſbyterians. What ſhall we think of the preſent eſtabliſhed church of *Scotland*, when theſe among them that ſometime profeſſed to be contending within doors for the ſame reformation-principles that we were appearing for without doors, are now betraying the cauſe of Preſbytery; and, under a pretence of religion, and a being as zealous as others for the Kingly government of Chriſt, are buſy pulling the Royal pearls out of his crown?

The preſent work ſo much magnified, I cannot but fear is alſo promoted by ſome that ſeem to be favouring of a Deiſtical ſpirit. I ſee Mr. *Rebe*, in his ſecond letter to Mr. *Fiſher*, (which ſeems to be more bulky than the reſt of his continuations, and to ſmell of a different ſtrain in ſome places from his ordinary), citing with approbation ſome words of Mr. *Edwards*'s ſermon; and therein I ſee very great ſeeming regard paid to the ſcripture, as *the great and ſtanding rule*, an *infallible and ſufficient rule*. It would ſeem any notable epithet may be given it, providing it be not called the *only* rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God. This good old way of ſpeaking, with reſpect to the ancient Proteſtant doctrine of the perfection of the ſcripture as the *only* rule of faith and practice, ſeems to be going out of faſhion. I confeſs I am not perfectly pleaſed with their teſtimony to the preſent extraordinary work, as a work of the Spirit of God, whoſe principles tend any way to the diſparagement of the word of God; nor yet their teſtimony, who take advantage

advantage from that work, to deſpiſe and diſparage a publick teſtimony for the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government of his houſe, appointed in that word. While our oppoſers in the eſtabliſhment make this providence a rebuke from heaven to us, and an appearance of God for them, againſt us and our ſeceſſion and teſtimony, it deſerves conſideration, whether they be borrowing God's weapons to fight againſt his cauſe among our hands, and whether it bears not ſome reſemblance to *Rabſhakeh*'s blaſphemy? *Iſa.* xxxvi. 10. *Am I now come up without the Lord againſt this land to deſtroy it? the Lord ſaid unto me, Go up againſt this land, and deſtroy it.* Our Lord hath warned us ſufficiently, that they who perſecute his people, and ſlay his witneſſes, *ſhall think they do God ſervice,* and *ſay, Let the Lord be magnified; is not the Lord among us?* John xvi. 2. Iſa. lxvi. 5. Micah iii. 10. 11. 12.

The unbiaſſed regard of the Aſſociate Preſbytery to the cauſe of reformation among their hands, appears even in a ſpecial circumſtance, wherein yet they are reproached, as if they were now appearing againſt Mr. *Whitefield* and his extraordinary work, becauſe the ſucceſs and ſpreading influence of it tends (ſay they) to make our intereſt among the people to ſink, and to draw them away from us: whereas Mr. *Whitefield* was caſt off by the unanimous conſent of the brethren of the Preſbytery, whenever they found his direct oppoſition to that cauſe. And this was done at his firſt coming to *Scotland*; and ſo before ever they knew what ſort of ſucceſs his miniſtrations could have here, and when at the ſame time they knew what ſplendid reports there were of his wonderful ſucceſs abroad: yet they durſt lay none of theſe things in balance with the publick cauſe among their hands, which they were ſure was the cauſe of God, or with the ancient work of reformation they were appearing for, which they were ſure was the work of God; and that therefore no new work, that men were attempting to raiſe upon the ruins of it, could be the work of God. Mean time, none of the promoters of the preſent applauded work have much ground to boaſt of any victory gained, or advantage obtained againſt us. It has

pleaſed

pleaſed the Lord to *keep theſe* hitherto *in the hour of temptation*, who were deſirous and concerned to *keep the word of his patience*, and to increaſe our congregations from time to time, notwithſtanding theſe extraordinary efforts of the enemy againſt us.

I ſee in the foreſaid ſecond letter of Mr. *Robe*'s I am more honourably yoked and quoted with the good Mr. *Shepherd*, than I expected, upon the ſubject of imaginary ideas, or the images of ſpiritual things repreſented to the fancy. I am content to be reckoned of the very ſame mind with that worthy author on this head. Only I don't think his mind or mine either can ſo evidently be known from theſe inſtances Mr. *Robe* gives, as from another which I ſhall cite from the ſame author on the *parable*, *p.* 80. where, ſpeaking of four ſorts of men that ſpin out the fineſt thread of deceit or deluſion to themſelves, and that think they believe when yet they have not the Son, he ſays, "The "third ſort is thoſe that cloſe not with promiſes only, but "with Chriſt himſelf; but it is only with the image and "fancy of him, which they think is himſelf. In true "faith the Father reveals the Son as he is, or the Son re- "veals himſelf as he is; and faith hence cloſes with him "as he is, *John* vi. 40. But ſome there be that hear of "him, hence think what he is. Hence a carnal mind i- "magines of him, as it imagines of a King in a far coun- "try, and falls down to his image, and truſts to it, and "depends on it, and joys in it, until a man come to be "converted, or to die, and then he ſees the deceit." With this doctrine of Mr. *Shepherd*'s I cordially agree: and as I am ready to ſuppoſe, if it had been faithfully preached in the weſt of *Scotland*, we would not perhaps have heard of ſo many converſions there; ſo I think Mr. *Fiſher* has too great advantage againſt his antagoniſt on this head, while he thinks to faſten an abſurdity upon him for ſaying, *If we have an imaginary idea of Chriſt, we that moment think upon a falſe Chriſt.* Hereupon Mr. *Robe* poſes him with queſtions to this purpoſe, *p.* 11. "Is not Chriſt true "and very man? Had he not a true body on earth? Has "he not a true body in heaven? Can you or any man elſe

"think

" think upon him really as he is God-man, without an i-
" maginary idea of it? Can you think of him ſcourged,
" crowned with thorns, crucified, without an imaginary
" idea of him? Is he not revealed in the goſpel as God-
" man? And can you juſtly think of him and receive him
" as offered, without an imaginary idea of him as man?"
And then attacks Mr. *Fiſher*'s philoſophy, for ſuppoſing, that *to have the imaginary idea of an abſent man, was to ſee a ſenſible object.* I confeſs I can ſee little either of the philoſopher or the divine in theſe mighty fallies. This way of ſpeaking appears indeed new and ſtrange divinity to me; and makes the object of faith truly a ſenſible object; not the object of faith, but of ſenſe. I think an imaginary idea of a crucified Chriſt, a man upon a croſs, is no better than a Popiſh crucifix, and mere mental idolatry. Though ſaving faith *eats the fleſh* of the Son of God, by believing his incarnation; and *drinks his blood*, by believing the ſatisfaction given by him to juſtice for us: yet to have any carnal notion or imaginary idea of his fleſh and blood, or human body, belongs not in the leaſt to ſaving faith, but rather to unbelief; and is a vain unprofitable imagination. Is it ſaving faith to ſee or *know Chriſt after the fleſh*, either by the *eye* as a preſent man, or in the *imagination* as an abſent man? May God deliver all his people from ſuch groſs and abominable idolatry. If ſuch views do natively and neceſſarily attend our faith while we ourſelves are in the fleſh, and have fleſh as well as ſpirit about us; yet are not theſe carnal views the greateſt lets and contradictions, inſtead of being helps and advantages to faith, or any part of it? Does not Chriſt forbid ſuch carnal notions of *eating his fleſh? John* vi. Such fancies and groſs imaginations made his hearers there to ſtumble at the true Chriſt: therefore he ſays to them, verſ. 65. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.* Is it not the glory of the goſpel, that it is *the miniſtration of the Spirit?* And is it not the great privilege of believers, that the Lord *manifeſts himſelf to them as he does not to the world?* The world have theſe carnal notions

ons and ideas of him. But are theſe any way ſib unto *God's ſhining into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face* (or perſon) *of Jeſus Chriſt?* What is *the preaching of Chriſt crucified?* 1 Cor. i. 23. *to them that believe?* Is it a giving them the notion of a man upon a croſs? Or, is it not *the wiſdom of God, and the power of God*, providing for himſelf a ſacrifice, or ſetting forth to us a propitiation for our ſins? So he was upon the *croſs*, ſo he is now upon the *throne*, 1 *John* ii. 2. Does faith's view of an incarnate God, or of the eternal Son of God become man, by taking to himſelf a true body and a reaſonable ſoul, or the believing view of God in our nature, and clothed with our fleſh; does it include, or rather does it not exclude any carnal fleſhly view of him? *If the fleſh profit nothing*, what a vain imagination is the view of an abſent man, or a fanciful thinking, that becauſe Chriſt was *made like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted*, that *he is altogether ſuch an one as ourſelves?* Does an imaginary view of the *man* help, or rather does it not hurt and hinder the ſaving ſight of the *God-man*, and the believing view of the glorious perſon of our *Immanuel, God with us? The Word was made fleſh*; but imaginary ideas of that *fleſh* are unprofitable fancies: we do not believe till *we behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. To ſee Chriſt ſavingly, and without a deluſion, is not to ſee *fleſh*, but *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Faith cannot fix upon *Immanuel* as *man with us*, but as *God with us*. It cannot ſee nor reſt upon *our nature in God*, but upon *God in our nature*.

Can that be any part of the object of faith which is perceptible by the fancy of every man, and is obvious to natural diſcerning? while the Spirit of God ſays, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; becauſe they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The things of man are known by the ſpirit of man; but the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* Nay, the things of God that are taught by the word and Spirit

of God, are indeed *the objects of faith*; but the things of man, which a natural man can receive, and a carnal man can discern, are the *objects of sense*, and of vain unprofitable imagination. As faith looks through the history of the gospel to the mystery of it, so does it through the material flesh of Christ to the mystery of God incarnate. Though we are to believe that Christ is *flesh of our flesh*; yet the *flesh* or *humanity* of Christ is only the glass or vail through which *we behold the glory of God*. The fancy that terminates on *the flesh*, is not only vain and unprofitable, but pernicious and prejudicial to the faith that is of God's operation; which, coming from God, leads to God, and cannot terminate upon Christ himself, but upon *God in Christ*. Hence the object of saving faith is no *image of Christ*, seen by fancy, or imaginary ideas; but *Christ*, who is, and as he is the *image of the invisible God*: and faith's acting upon this object, is a *seeing of him that is invisible*, and no sight of him visible by the bodily eye, or perceptible by natural fancy and imagination. To make faith then include any carnal conception of Christ's humanity, is a deep deceit and delusion, and as remote from saving faith, as the image one in this part of the earth may frame in his head of the Emperor of *China*. That part of Christ that is visible, was the object of *sense on earth*, and is the object of *vision in heaven*, and may be the object of *any man's fancy* or imagination; but never was, nor ever will be the object of faith, but as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby. Nothing sensible, nothing corporeal, nothing visible can properly be the object of that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. and *looks not to the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Hence our believing on Christ, a visible Christ present or absent, is not faith, but fancy, if we believe not on the invisible God that sent him, *John* xii. 44. *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.* And verse 45. *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.* And chap. xiv. 9. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* Matth. x. 40. *He that receiveth me, receiveth*

ceiveth him that ſent me. Mark ix. 37. *Whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me.*

In the act of receiving Chriſt as God-man, to have (what Mr. *Robe* calls) an imaginary idea of him as man, is to believe and not believe. It is to receive the perſon of Chriſt, and yet to divide the perſon. To receive the God-man, is faith: but to have an imaginary idea of him as man, is not faith, but unbelief; for, as man ſimply, he is not the object of faith, but of ſenſe or fancy. It is a doing what Chriſt forbids; as he did to *Mary*, *Touch me not*; for it is a mere mental handling of his body; otherwiſe why does Mr. *Robe* ſpeak of his being revealed and offered as *God-man*, and of receiving him as offered; and yet thereupon ſay, *Can you then juſtly think upon him without an imaginary idea of him as man*, ſince he cannot extend that idea to the perſon of the God-man?

Hence one might aſk Mr. *Robe*, Can he, or any man elſe, have an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, and yet that ſame moment think upon him really as he is God-man? unleſs Mr. *Robe*'s meaning were, that he cannot believe without unbelief; or that he cannot think right without thinking wrong, as long as he has the fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit within him. In this ſenſe ſome would grant it is a truth: but this is the reverſe of Mr. *Robe*'s meaning; for he will have this imaginary idea of Chriſt wrapt in with faith, and with the view, not of a falſe Chriſt, but of the true Chriſt, though yet he owns the idea reſpects only Chriſt as man.

That imaginary idea that cannot think of him juſtly, but only of the *fleſh that profiteth nothing*, muſt be a very ill neighbour, yea a neck-break to faith; which will have nothing to do with a half Chriſt, but conceives of, receives and matches with the whole perſon of our *Immanuel*. We read of the myſtery of faith; but to conceive of Chriſt as man, is indeed no myſtery at all: yea, to conceive of him as man, and yet at the ſame time to conceive of him and receive him as God-man, are flat contradictions; and, till faith get itſelf ſhaken looſe of that unprofitable mate, the *imaginary idea of him as man*, it will never believe to any profit or advantage, nor believe either *to the ſaving of the*

ſoul, Heb. x. 39. or *to the giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. What can be thought then of this doctrine of imaginary ideas? I fear it belongs to that ſort of *philoſophy* which the Spirit of God warns us againſt, *Col.* ii. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt.* God ſays, *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you?* And ſuch is the abſtract notion and vain imagination of Chriſt's humanity, or of Chriſt as man. It is true, the two natures of Chriſt are diſtinct, and ſo may be ſuppoſed to be the object of diſtinct ideas: but neither the one nor the other *ſeparately* are the object of ſaving faith, but only the perſon God-man. If we cannot have an imaginary idea of him as God-man, nor can conceive of, or receive him as ſuch, but only by faith; then how can the imaginary idea of him as man belong to faith, while it cannot but ſeparate the *man* from the *God?* And ſo, the object of that idea being *man*, and not *God*, according to Mr. *Robe*'s conceſſion, *p.* 12. one cannot but, the moment he hath that idea, think upon a falſe Chriſt, according to Mr. *Fiſher*'s aſſertion; becauſe he thinks only upon a man: and indeed his imaginary ideas can lead him no higher. Therefore, when theſe are brought into the nature of faith, as a *ſine qua non*, ſo as faith cannot be acted without them, it muſt land either in a *falſe faith* or a *falſe Chriſt*, or *both*: from which may the Lord in mercy deliver us; for our ſenſes and imaginations will give us little help.

And this leads me to notice another word Mr. *Robe* has to Mr. *Fiſher*, in that ſame 12th page: "Your aſ-
"ſertion, That our ſenſes and imagination cannot aſſiſt
"us at all in thinking upon the divine nature and per-
"fections, is in flat contradiction to what the Apoſtle
"ſaith, *Rom.* i. 20. *For the inviſible things of him from*
"*the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being under-*
"*ſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power*
"*and Godhead.*--- Our ſenſes [ſays he] and imagination
"are greatly helpful to bring us to the knowledge of the
"divine nature and perfections." I cannot but wonder

at

at this unguarded divinity. No doubt, *the heavens declare the glory of God*, and ſhew that a powerful God was the maker of them; and the Apoſtle there ſays the ſame upon the matter, that the viſible *frame* declares it hath an inviſible *framer*; and ſo the light of nature, and works of creation, teach the *quòd ſit*, or *that God is*, and that he muſt be clothed with ſuch perfections of wiſdom and power as theſe works declare: but, if Mr. *Robe* think, that theſe viſible things that ſtrike our ſenſes and imagination, can lead us to the *quid ſit*, or *what God is*, and let us into the knowledge or right notion of the inviſible divine nature and perfections, then there would be little need of any other Bible than the viſible heavens. To ſay, that our ſenſes and imagination are greatly helpful thus to the knowledge of the divine nature and perfections, or to think upon the inviſible things of God, that are the objects of faith, and not of ſenſe, is, I ſuppoſe, in flat contradiction to what the ſame Apoſtle ſays, 1 *Cor.* ii. 11. 12. 13. *The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now, we have received, not the Spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*; not natural and ſenſible things with ſpiritual, by our own imagination, but ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, by a faith of God's operation. Hence it is the great end of Chriſt's promiſing to ſend the Spirit, *to glorify him, by ſhewing the things of God that are his*, John xvi. 14. 15. We know nothing that is ſpiritual, in a ſpiritual way, without the teaching of the Spirit; therefore Chriſt promiſes, *He* (the Spirit) *ſhall teach you all things*, John xiv. 26. and hence he is called the *Anointing, that teacheth us all things*, and *makes us know all things*, 1 John ii. 20. 27. If there be any thing beſide theſe *all things* neceſſary, that he only teacheth, I know not what elſe they can be, but unprofitable nothings, and imaginary ideas indeed. Without this ſpiritual and divine teaching, to make us know the things and the perfections

of

of God, our ſenſes and imagination are ſo far from being helpful to the knowledge of the divine nature and perfections, that they are only helpful for furthering mens ignorance of God, and for making them abuſe all the knowledge they have of God's being and attributes that way, unto more and more idolatry, imagery, and groſs darkneſs.

The deſign and ſcope of the Apoſtle, in that verſe cited by Mr. *Robe*, is not ſo much to ſhew what knowledge of God's nature and perfections men may attain by the viſible works of creation, as rather, what knowledge of him, attainable this way, they ſmother and impriſon, by *holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, verſe 18. and how all the knowledge of God they had by the creature, made them err concerning the Creator, unto vain imaginations about him, *verſe* 21. and how this light and knowledge, which rendered them inexcuſable for not making a better uſe of it, did, through the corruption of their nature, make them ſtill more culpable; their knowledge, being fewel to their pride and vain glory, inſtead of being greatly helpful, was greatly hurtful to them, and declarative of their ignorance and folly, *verſe* 22. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things*, verſe 23. Hence the more knowledge, wiſdom and learning, that any of the Heathens had, the farther were they from the true knowledge of God, and the more ſuperſtitious and idolatrous; as appeared in the *Athenians*, Acts xvii. 16. who were *wholly given to idolatry*, or *full of idols*, as in the margin: their knowledge and learning made them the greater enemies to a *crucified Chriſt*, who was *to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks* (eſpecially their moſt learned philoſophers, nothing but) *fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 23. Here was all the knowledge of God their ſenſes and imagination in the contemplation of the creature helped them unto; and ſuch is all the help and aſſiſtance our ſenſes and imagination can give us in thinking upon the divine nature and perfections, notwithſtanding

withſtanding of all that may be known, or is knowable of God by the light of nature, and by the conſideration of the creatures, *Rom.* i. 19. 20. This abuſe of nature's light is ſo natural to all the lapſed race of mankind, that it is charged upon all the Heathen world, *They became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image*, &c. Corrupt nature abuſed all the notions they had of God from the viſible creation, to more and more vile and abominable thoughts of God: and no wonder, ſince it may be ſaid of them, as it was of the whole world of old before the flood, *that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. In the margin it is the *whole imagination*. And, if the whole and every imagination be thus corrupt, how *greatly helpful* our imagination can be to the knowledge of God, may eaſily be gueſſed. But was this the caſe of the old world only? Was this the caſe of the Heathen nations only? No, no; the ſcope of the Apoſtle, in theſe firſt three chapters of that epiſtle to the *Romans*, is, to prove both Jews and Heathens to be alike ſinful and corrupt, *Rom.* iii. 9. *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wiſe: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin.* And the deſign of God therein is, *verſ.* 19. *That every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* And why this? but that, ſince *all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God*, verſ. 23. and ſo are expoſed *to the wrath of God revealed from heaven* in the law, ſinners may flee to *the righteouſneſs of God revealed in the goſpel*, chap. i. 17. 18. and, apprehending themſelves *by nature children of wrath*, may apprehend God *juſtifying freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt; whom God hath ſet forth to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus.* This is the knowledge of God and his perfections which the Spirit of God by the goſpel leads us to, and from which our ſenſes and imagination

on do greatly alienate us, instead of being greatly helpful to us.

Thus far I have indeed incroached upon what is the proper province of another and a fitter hand; which I was led to by Mr. *Robe*'s citing Mr. *Shepherd* and me upon the subject of imaginary ideas, or the images of spiritual things, Christ, heaven or hell, represented to the fancy.

May this generation be delivered from an imaginary faith, religion and conversion; which will neither unite them to the true Christ, nor bring them to the true heaven, nor keep them out of the true hell. And may the Lord deliver all his people from the influence of *gross delusion*, instead of *gospel-doctrine*; from *carnal trash*, instead of *spiritual truth*; and from the truth as it is *in mens fancy* and imagination, instead of the truth *as it is in Jesus*, and in his blessed word, the *only* rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.

FAITH

FAITH no FANCY:

OR,

A Treatise of mental Images, &c.

BEING obliged to write in defence of the truth I have delivered in the above *Appendix*, against the violent and virulent attacks made upon it in the pamphlet, intitled, *Mr. Robe's Fourth Letter to Mr. Fisher*; that my readers may have the subject-matter of the following treatise more distinctly before them, it seems necessary, that I handle it in different parts or chapters. That I may reduce to some method the remarks I offer upon that pamphlet,

I. I would consider in general, what I take to be the sum and substance of Mr. *Robe*'s gross divinity and philosophy, as he lays it pages 30 and 34 of his *Letter*.

II. I would speak of the glorious person of Christ, our Emmanuel, God-man, and the mysterious constitution thereof; shewing, how his humanity therein existing can be the object of faith only, and not of fancy, or any imaginary idea.

III. I would shew the ignorance, error, atheism and idolatry, imported in an imaginary idea of Christ as man; and hence,

IV. The absurdity of that principle, That an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is helpful to the faith of his being God-man; and that no imaginary idea of any corporeal object can give any help, either to the divine or human faith of any truth or proposition relating to that object.

V. Offer particular remarks upon all the parts of Mr. *Robe's* letter relating to this subject, and in so far as he impugns the doctrine delivered in the above *Appendix*, and charges it with heresy and blasphemy.

VI. Shew in what respects the human nature of Christ is the object of faith, so as it cannot be the object of any imaginary idea.

VII. Adduce the sentiments of eminent divines on the subject; though I have seen none directly treating it.

VIII. Offer some remarks upon certain virulent passages of Mr. *Robe*'s pamphlet relating to Deism, which he seems unable to purge himself from; and schism, which he charges the Associate Presbytery with, *&c.*

CHAP. I.

WHen false worship had prevailed in the church of old, unto its ruin, God shewed and represented it unto his Prophets under the name and appearance of a *chamber of imagery*, *Ezek.* viii. 12. For therein were pourtrayed all the abominations wherewith the worship of God was defiled, and religion corrupted. Most of my work at present is, to take a view of some *chambers of imagery* yet more secret and hidden, namely, retired mental ones; in which we may see many abominations wherewith both the spiritual doctrine of faith, and the divine worship of the gospel is corrupted, and the Christian religion in danger of being ruined. From this secret chamber of mental or internal imagery hath come forth all the external gross imagery that ever was in the world, and especially in the Christian church; by which means the church of *Rome* became antichristian †. These imaginary ideas, which are but vain imaginations, and about corporeal objects, brought in now by Mr. *Robe*, as belonging to the act or object of faith, are, in my opinion, like a new opening of the *bottomless pit*, out of the smoke whereof came locusts upon the earth, *Rev.* ix. 2. 3.; because, in so far as these ideas are brought out of their own natural place, and supposed to be helpful in the supernatural subjects of divinity, they are no better than a smoke out of the pit, darkening the sun and the air, corrupting the doctrine, obscuring the light of the truth of God, and (whatever be Mr. *Robe*'s design) tending, in themselves, to cover the face of the earth with the darkness of gross error and delusion, and to lay a new foundation for the spreading of idolatry and superstition, by filling the minds of people with carnal, carnal notions of Christ as man, and of his doing and dying, as human actions and sufferings; as if these notions

† See *Morning Exercises*, vol. 5. sermon 10. intitled, *The chambers of imagery in the church of* Rome *laid open.*

supernatural

notions were helpful to apprehend Christ the God-man in his mediatorial works exhibited in the gospel: while yet the glory of the gospel is spiritual and invisible, not obvious to the senses and imaginations of men. There is nothing in the gospel visible but unto faith; as the light of the sun is nothing to them who have no eyes. A dog and a staff are of more use to a blind man than the sun in the firmament. Such as are spiritually blind, and want the eyes of faith, or have lost the use and exercise thereof, can see nothing in the gospel, however great and glorious things are spoken of it. The light shines in darkness, and their darkness comprehends it not. The image of Christ as God in our nature, represented to us in the light of the gospel, which is the only glass wherein we can behold his glory, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. is of such a nature, that no image of his human body formed in the brain, can stand before it, any more than *Dagon* could stand before the ark of God. As Christ is present in the gospel, and present, like himself, in his personal, mediatorial and matchless glory; so he is present there only to our faith and spiritual understanding; while the word is nigh unto us, even the word of faith, *Rom.* x. 6. 7. 8. insomuch that none need say he is absent, and *who shall ascend into heaven, to bring him down from thence, or descend into the deep to bring him up* from the dead? Christ, by his *human body*, was once here present to natural *sense*; by his *divine Spirit* he is sometimes present to spiritual *sense* and *experience*: But he is no way present to our faith, but in the gospel; which, however it be a view through a glass darkly, yet in such a way and manner, that it is the best view of him that can be had, till we *see him face to face*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. But Mr. *Robe* hath told us of another way of Christ's being present, namely, to fancy and imagination, as to his human nature now in heaven; and that in the same way and manner we think of any other absent man; and that this is absolutely necessary and greatly helpful to faith. This is the new, strange, and fantastical doctrine published in *Mr.* Robe's *fourth letter to Mr.* Fisher; and we have what I may call the sum and substance of it in the following paragraph of that letter, *p.* 30. and 31. "*Third* POSITION, I asserted, and do assert, That we cannot think upon Jesus Christ "really as he is, God and man, in two distinct natures, and "one person for ever, without an imaginary idea of him as "man, or in his human nature, consisting of a true body "and a reasonable soul. The grounds and reasons of this "are, That, as we would not have a just conception of the "glorious Mediator, if we have not a conception and idea of

" him as the very true and eternal God, as well as true and real " man; ſo we cannot have a juſt conception of him, if we " have not a conception and idea of him as true and real man, " as well as the true and eternal God; foraſmuch as the Me- " diator is as really man as he is God: And, as we ought " to form no imaginary idea of him as he is God, but a " pure conception, without any form of repreſentation of " him as God in our minds; ſo we can no more conceive, " and have an idea of him in our underſtandings as man, " but what is called an imaginary idea, or an idea of him in " our minds, by the exerciſe of our imagination, than we " can of *Enoch* or *Elias*, or any other man, who is now in " heaven: For this reaſon, that our Lord's human nature, and " particularly his glorified and ſuperexalted body, hath all " the eſſential properties of any other body, and no other. " And therefore, if we can never think of any other human " nature, or human body, through our natural conſtitution, " and the nature of bodies, but by an imaginary idea, when " abſent from us, as indeed we cannot, we can never think " upon the Mediator as man, and his body now in heaven, " by any other idea. So then, when we think upon the Lord " Jeſus Chriſt, as he is God and man in two diſtinct natures, and " one perſon for ever, I muſt conceive of him to be true and " real man: And this is what is called an imaginary idea of " him. I muſt further, by a mere act of my underſtanding, " conceive of him, as not only man, but the very true and e- " ternal God. And, *3dly*, I muſt conceive the manhood per- " ſonally united with the Godhead in the ſecond perſon. If " any of theſe three be wanting, I have not ſuch an idea of " the Mediator God-man as ſhould be. Sir, [meaning Mr. " *Fiſher*] you'll pleaſe tell the honeſt well-meaning people, in " your next warning, that the plain *Scots* of what I aſſerted " here was, that we cannot think upon Jeſus Chriſt, as he " really is, God-man, without thinking of him as man as real- " ly as God; and that by the exerciſe of the ſame faculties " and powers I think and conceive of other men."

Here is a ſwatch of Mr. *Robe*'s ſtrange divinity and philoſophy. But, before I offer remarks upon this paragraph, it will be neceſſary to premiſe a few things for explaining ſome terms. Since we will have ſo much occaſion to ſpeak of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, two things here may be previouſly inquired into. 1. What is to be underſtood by an imaginary idea? 2. What is to be underſtood by Chriſt as man?

SECT.

Sect. I.

First, In order to understand what is meant by an imaginary idea. By an idea is ordinarily understood the imaginary representation of any thing conceived in the mind. Philosophers define an idea thus: "The form or representation "of any sensible object, transmitted into the brain through "the organs of sight or the eye." But, in a more general sense, it is taken for, "the immediate object of understand- "ing, whatever it be." Hence, with logicians, idea is, "not "only to be understood of those images that are painted by "the fancy, but all that is within our understanding, when "we can truly say, We conceive a thing, after what manner "soever we conceive it."

Ideas are said to be either simple or complex, as logicians speak. Simple ideas are these that come into our mind by sensation; as, colours by the eye, sounds by the ear, *&c.* Complex or compound ideas are founded by the power which the mind hath of comparing, separating, or extracting its simple ideas, which come into it by sensation and reflexion. It is observed by philosophers, how easily the mind can vary, by imagination, these ideas received by outward sense; that they may represent objects which we never perceived by any sense, yea, that perhaps never existed. And this is done divers ways. As, (1.) By composition, when the mind joins two ideas of things which it perceives, and separate; as, when, out of the idea of a mountain, and the idea of gold, we form the idea of a golden mountain. (2.) By ampliation; whereby a thing whose idea is drawn from the senses, is, by the imagination, represented to be greater than it is; as, when, out of the idea of a man of common stature, we form the idea of a giant. (3.) By diminution; as, when, out of the idea of a man of common stature, we form the idea of a pigmy or dwarf. (4.) By accommodation; whereby we bring in the idea of things which we see, for forming the idea of an object we never saw; as, the idea of some new artifice, which none have ever seen, formed in the mind of the skilful artificer.

Again, ideas are ranked by philosophers into two sorts: one is, corporeal or sensitive ideas; the other is, spiritual or intellectual. The former respects bodily things, by which a man forms or acquires ideas or *sensations* of what relates to bodies: The latter are these by which the soul forms or acquires ideas of itself; of its own actions; or ideas of other minds or spirits, and spiritual things, by *reflexion*. Sensitive ideas

ideas are also designed imaginative, though, when the object is present to the sense, it is properly sensitive; when present to the fancy, it is imaginative, when a man imagines his mind does not conceive the object itself as present, but only sees the present image of it pictured in his brain. Imaginations are active or passive: The imagination is passive in perceiving or receiving, but mostly active in forming ideas. And, in forming imaginative ideas, in all the four different modes above mentioned, it is manifest, that the mind is active. But, when this activity of it is applied to any object that is supposed to be the object of faith, as if it contributed any help to the saving knowledge of that object, then indeed it may be justly designed, in Mr. *Robe*'s words, An imaginary idea; and does not amount even to what the learned *De Vries* calls but *idealis sapientia*, ideal wisdom; and which is reckoned by philosophers themselves notional and nominal, instead of what is real and solid. Their definition of the word *imaginary* is, *A thing not real, but fantastick, that appears only in fashion or form, and hath no real being but in one's fancy.*

I have, in the following discourse, made use of the foresaid common distinction of ideas into sensitive and intellectual; though I know that some who treat of the *procedure, extent, and limits of human understanding*, are for rejecting and exploding that distinction, allowing none but these of sensation properly. But, my opponent giving occasion for this distinction, and I having no occasion to dispute this point, have not chosen to supersede the use of it.

Some assert, that nothing is properly an idea, but what stands in the mind for an image or representation of some thing which is not in it. The thing must be without us; and, because it cannot itself enter, the likeness of it only is conveyed through the senses into the imagination.

That much plain and obvious knowledge is lost in a confused jumble and rout of ideas, and by the means of our tedious modern systems upon that subject. We are told by others also, That *Tertullian* also observed of old, how, in the *Platonick* ideas, rashly and unduly mixed with Christian faith, the seeds of heresy and error clearly appeared. Hence it was a saying of his, which hath been quoted by *Jerome* and others of the fathers, *Hæreticorum patriarchæ philosophi*, That philosophy paved the way to heresy; which it hath done in several respects. And the Apostle *Paul* seems apprehensive it would do so, *Col.* ii. 8. Those that were bred in the schools of the philosophers, did oft adapt their notions in divinity to these which they had before learned there. Thus *Hermogenes*, in

in the second century, maintained what *Aristotle*, and some other heathen philosophers that followed him, taught about the eternity of the world. So, in our days, many orthodox divines have seen ground to notice, how much the ideal doctrine of *Cartesius* and his followers hath tended to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel, and propagate abundance of erroneous principles. But, if the mixture of the purest ideas that philosophers speak of, have had a ruining influence upon religion, much more, may we suppose, will the gross and new doctrine of imaginary ideas; which is no part of religious, nor so much as of rational knowledge, whatever materials thereof may be supposed to ly therein. The Apostle, 1 *Thess.* v. 23. distinguishes between *spirit* and *soul* and *body*. Upon which one observes, "That *spirit* is that part of our frame "which is immaterial, and, consequently, hath immortality "in its natural frame and essence; wherein consists the dignity of our nature, and whereby we bear the image of him "from whom it was originally breathed into men: That the "inferior *soul* is that part of us which is mortal; that the "heathen philosophers called it, the beast in us, because the "animal and sensitive soul is supposed common to us with "the brutes." Hence, says another, "Man is an amphibious "creature, of a middle order and nature between angels "and brutes: With the brutes he partakes of a corporeal soul, "and a mass of animal spirits; with the angels he partakes "of an intelligent, immortal, immaterial spirit †." Man, (says the

† Man is but for a little while lower than the angels, while his great soul is cooped up in a house of clay. By his body, he is allied to the earth, and to the beasts that perish; and yet, by his soul, which is spiritual and immortal, he is so near a-kin to the holy angels, that he may be truly said to be but a little lower than they. *Henry* on *Psal.* viii. Mr. *Rich. Baxter* on 1 *Thess.* v. 23. says, "The Apostle does not make spirit, "soul and body, three substantial compounded parts of man.—But in "these things even Christian philosophers differ. 1. Some think, man "hath three distinct souls, intellectual, sensitive and vegetative. 2. Some, "that he hath two, intellectual and sensitive; and that the vegetative is "a part of the body. 3. Some, that he hath but one, with these three "faculties. 4. Some, that he hath but one, with these two faculties, "intellectual and sensitive. 5. Some, that he hath but one, with the faculty of intellection and will; and that the sensitive is corporeal. (So "little do we know ourselves).—What I think most probable I have opened *in methodo theologiæ*; That man hath but one substantial soul, with "both intellectual and sensitive faculties; and that it is uncertain whether "the vegetative be its faculty, or only the faculty of the igneous or ethereal substance which is the immediate vehicle of the soul. It is enough for us to know as much of our souls as our duty in using them,

"and

" the foresaid anonimous author), with respect to the simple " perception of mere sense, is still upon the same level with " brutes; he is altogether passive; he retains all the impres- " sions of outward objects, but in the order in which they " were stamped, without altering, dividing, compounding, " or comparing them with one another: And they would al- " ways continue so in the imagination, if there were not a " principle above matter, first to contemplate and view them, " and then to work up these rude and gross materials into a " great variety of curious arts and sciences. The simple per- " ception of brutes, says he, is, properly speaking, the per- " ception of the object by the idea, and not the perception " of the idea itself, or any view or contemplation of it, in " distinction from the object; which simple perception of " sense they have from their wise Creator, oftimes to a greater " perfection than men; because the ideas of sense in the ima- " gination of brutes are the whole sum and substance of their " knowledge, (to speak by way of analogy), which in men are " but materials for it, &c.; and because they are the sole prin- " ciples of their actions, insomuch as that they are wholly " and passively conducted in all their pursuits, by the force " and impulse of these ideas of sensation alone, (which is na- " tural instinct), and not by any separate view or contempla- " tion of them. All ideas, says the same author, beyond these " that are simple, (which come into the imagination without " the concurrence of the intellect), are the creatures of the " intellect or understanding in men; which hath an arbitrary " power over these ideas, to alter, enlarge, diminish, and to " turn and wind them at pleasure; and thus raises up to itself " a new set of compound ideas, with which the imagination " is furnished, &c. Thus the ideas of many men may be put together

" and our felicity, doth require; as he may know his clock, watch, " house, horse, who knows not how to make them, nor can anatomize " them." *Mastricht prodromi theol.* p. 51. *Quas in tribus viventium speciebus dispersas vides tres animas, vegetativam, sensitivam & rationalem, eas unitas habes in homine; non tanquam totidem animas, sed tanquam tot ejusdem animæ partes seu gradus.* (*Et supra*). *De partibus essentialibus, seu mavis facultatibus, sive enim partes dicas, sive facultates; & si partes, sive actuales, sive potentiales, parum refert; modò animam nobis relinquas immaterialem.* Maccovii distinct. & regulæ, p. 67. *Hominis tantùm duæ sunt partes essentiales, corpus, scilicet, & anima.*—Obj. ex 1 Thess. v. 23. *Ubi tres nominantur, corpus, anima & spiritus.* Resp. Dum anima & spiritus corpori contradistinguuntur, non intelliguntur duo diversa, sed una eademque res, per diversas facultates expressa: nam per animam, intelligitur anima sensitiva, per spiritum facultas rationalis, ut hoc prolixè probatur à Theod. Beza in annotat. maj. N. T.

" together into the idea of an army; many sheep to make
" up the idea of a flock; many houses the idea of a city. Thus
" also the idea of one man is, by the intellect, made to stand
" for all mankind; which is called an universal idea, *&c.* The
" same author thinks it blameable in philosophers, to confound
" the ideas of sensation with the operations of the mind upon
" them, making the same thing to be an idea and the opera-
" tion of the mind upon an idea at the same time. And this
" new set of ideas is expressed by what he calls, the absurd
" term of an idea of reflexion; whereas, if they had distin-
" guished them, in plain language, into ideas of sense and
" ideas of reason, it would be better understood; because e-
" very body could then see, that reason is the operating of
" our mind upon our ideas, *&c.* There is an essential dif-
" ference between a simple perception of the sense, and a
" simple apprehension of the mind: The consequence of the
" former is an idea in the imagination. This perception of
" sense is common to us with brutes, that are moved by the
" internal impulse of these ideas which they have got from
" the impression of the outward object; whereas the latter,
" says he, that is, the simple apprehension of the intellect, is
" an act and operation of the mind, not of the sense; and
" is the perfection and excellency of the human soul; where-
" by the pure intellect only takes, among its first operations,
" a simple view or survey of these ideas of sensation, in the
" very order and condition wherein they ly in the imagination.
" This is what logicians call simple apprehension, but gene-
" rally confound with pure sensation.

" The imagination is stored with an immense number of
" ideas of all objects which occur to the senses. What an
" amazing variety of them is daily conveyed in by that one
" sense of seeing? To which if ye add these of the other sen-
" ses, we shall render the number inexhaustible. And yet
" nothing of all these is properly knowledge, considered in
" themselves, and abstractly from that intuition or view
" taken of them by the pure intellect: They are only the rude
" and unwrought materials heaped together for that superstru-
" cture which every man is to raise, according to the pecu-
" liar disposition of his natural genius, *&c.*"

This account I have here given of ideas, may be of use in my following discourse: Wherein I have occasion to notice, how much my opponent confounds sense and imagination with knowledge and understanding, and how much the objects of these are, by his doctrine, blended with the objects of faith.

Senſe, imagination, and underſtanding, have been diſtinguiſhed in philoſophy, by the following example. When we behold the ſun with open eyes, then external *ſenſe* is manifeſt; when we ſhut our eyes, and think upon the ſun, then internal ſenſe or *imagination* is manifeſt. But, when we conſider the apparent diſtance, and compare the apparent magnitude or bulk of the ſun, with what muſt be the real diſtance and real bulk of it, then *underſtanding* is manifeſted, by deducing conſequences from manifeſt principles. The firſt two of theſe belong to the ſenſitive part of man, the laſt to the rational. Imaginary ideas relate to the former; and theſe have no other object, (as Mr. *Robe* frequently and ſolemnly aſſerts), but things corporeal. Intellectual ideas relate to the rational part. Senſe, reaſon and faith are powers and faculties that act in their own proper ſpheres, as different in themſelves, as the firſt, ſecond and third heaven. *Senſe*, whether external or internal, (as above mentioned), hath for its object things corporeal; *reaſon*, properly, things intellectual; and *faith*, things ſpiritual and ſupernatural, revealed in God's word. Senſe cannot aſpire to the ſphere of reaſon, nor reaſon to the ſphere of faith; and far leſs can ſenſe and imaginary ideas do ſo.

Thus far I have given my reader ſome hints of philoſophy anent ideas. But, as to imaginary ones, though I am obliged ſo frequently, in the progreſs, to ſpeak theſe words over and over, I ſcarce know if I have yet touched the proper meaning of the term *imaginary idea*. It is ſuch an odd and unuſual phraſe, eſpecially when applied to any ſubject of divinity, that even the grammatical explication of it ſeems to have a ſtrange appearance: For, if, according to the ſchools, an idea is the *image of a thing* in the mind, then an imaginary idea muſt ſignify an imaginary image in the mind; which is much the ſame as if one ſhould ſpeak of a *fantaſtical fancy*, or a *notional notion*: And yet this is what the author I have to do with, ſeems to be pleading for, as abſolutely neceſſary and greatly helpful to faith, while he makes the imaginary idea of Chriſt, as man, ſuch a leading and eſſential ingredient therein. But I ſhall take this term in the moſt favourable ſenſe I can; that is, for the property of an idea, by which an *imaginative* is contradiſtinguiſhed from an *intellectual* one: If ſuch a diſtinction can be allowed, notwithſtanding what is ſaid above by ſome, that there are no ideas, properly ſo called, but theſe of ſenſation only; becauſe we have no images of ſpiritual objects, or direct and immediate repreſentations thereof, as we have of objects that are material or corporeal.

But,

But, as the distinction between imaginative and intellectual ideas is very common in philosophy; so, when I make use of it, in the following work, I intend mainly to distinguish the man from the beast, or these acts that are rational, from these that are merely sensitive.

Sect. II.

I come, *secondly*, to explain what is to be understood by *Christ as Man*: Of which Mr. *Robe* asserts, we must necessarily have an imaginary idea, in order to believing. I know not if ever any divine expressed himself in such terms as these, namely, *an imaginary idea of Christ as man:* Which if they are agreeable either to philosophy or divinity, reason or religion, is what I am to inquire into.

I premise, that to think of a corporeal object by an imaginary idea in a natural way, is a natural action of the mind or soul as animal and sensitive. And this can be no otherwise sinful in itself than other natural actions. Thus, tho' it was lawful and innocent for the natural bodily eyes of the multitude to look upon Christ's human body, when he was on earth; and to touch it, when pressed upon him in the throng; or yet, when out of his sight, to fancy or imagine what a man he was whom they saw; yet, to incorporate or mix these natural actions with spiritual and religious ones, or with the actings of faith, would have been highly absurd: For, to make that which is the object of sense present, or the object of fancy absent, to be the object of faith and worship, is not only contradictory to the nature of divine faith and worship, but equally idolatrous with making any other man, or any other corporeal object of sense or fancy, to be so. For there is no difference between Christ considered only as a human creature, or a corporeal object, (as Mr. *Robe* speaks) and any other human creature, or corporeal object, as such, which may be seen or viewed by the eye or fancy in a natural way without sin: But to be viewed or thought of in a religious way, so as to make that any part of the object of faith or religious worship, is as monstrous idolatry as ever was among heathens; and contrary to the very dictates of natural reason and natural religion among wise heathens; who have said, (with a *si, id est, quum,* seeing,) *Si Deus est animus,——sit purâ mente colendus.* The object of faith and worship is some other thing, than what can fall within the compass of any man's natural sense or fancy, *Heb.* xi. 1. 27. *Joh.* iv. 24. It is not flesh, or our

human nature in God, that we believe in, nor worſhip; but God himſelf made manifeſt in the fleſh, or God in our nature; otherwiſe we worſhip an idol and image of our own brain. Hence, when ſound divines ſpeak of *Chriſt as man*, or as a man, they never underſtand it in Mr. *Robe*'s ſenſe, namely, of his human body, as it is the object of an imaginary idea, and ſo diſtinct from the divine nature and perſon of Chriſt. But, by Chriſt as man, or as a man, they underſtand the *perſon* of Chriſt, denominate from his *manhood*: Which is a moſt uſual figure, called a *Synecdoche* of the part for the whole; and a part ſometimes, in point of expreſſion and denomination only, and not in point of conception or imagination; for many times this figure of a part denominating the whole, includes nothing but the conception of the thing or perſon denominate by that part. For example, we find ſometimes a perſon denominate from a quality, which cannot be conceived without the ſubject, or perſon in which that quality ſubſiſts; ſuppoſe it to be a *black Indian*, or a *white European*, we call the one a *Black*, and the other a *White*: In which denomination, though it be only from the different colours, yet it is not colours but perſons that are meant or conceived of; becauſe theſe qualities white and black cannot be conceived in the abſtract, without ſome thing or perſon thus denominate by that quality. Sometimes, by this figure, the denomination is given to the perſon from ſome part; and yet the idea of that part is not included in the conception of what is thus denominate, but only the perſon denominate by it: For example, in that queſtion *Iſa.* i. 12. *Who hath required this at your hand?* here perſons are meant, though denominate from the hand; becauſe that is the inſtrument of operation or working: But the imaginary idea of a hand would here be very abſurd. Sometimes perſons are denominate from the foot, as in that expreſſion, *Keep thy foot when thou goeſt into the houſe of God*, Eccleſ. v. 1. Here perſons walking, are denominate from that member of the body by which they walk: And ſo here, to be ſure, the imaginary idea of a foot would be quite out of purpoſe. Thus, men are ſometimes denominate from the knee, as *Iſa.* xlv. 23. *To me every knee ſhall bow*; that is, every perſon ſhall worſhip; the *knee* being the outward inſtrument of homage: This denomination includes no neceſſity at all of an imaginary idea of every bodily knee, but merely the conception of perſons that, either by conſent or conſtraint, ſhall be obliged to pay homage to Chriſt. There would be no end of inſtances of this

this sort. But, in those that I have given, surely an imaginary idea of hands, and feet, and knees, would import no part of rational knowledge or reflexion, but an idea without understanding; for so Mr. *Robe* afterwards acknowledges, *where it ends, understanding proceeds.* Such an imaginary idea of Christ as man, being in itself without understanding, is what I contend against, as not belonging to judgment or reason, far less to faith or religion.

But all sound divines, as I said, when they speak of Christ as man, they always understand the person of Christ denominate from his manhood †: Or, if they speak of his human nature as contradistinct from his divine, they speak of it in such a way as is agreeable with its being the object of rational knowledge and true faith. But so it cannot be, when it is spoke of as the object of an imaginary idea.

Hence it is easy to prove, that the sense in which Mr. *Robe* speaks of *Christ as man,* cannot be the sense in which any orthodox divine ever spoke of it. Tho' he expresses himself on this head, in such a way as, in my opinion, is irreconcileable with good sense and reason; yet, that I may not be supposed to have written this treatise so idly, as to fill it with trifling criticisms upon ungrammatical expressions, or to spend time in a mere logomachy, or strife and contention about the meaning of words, I shall here make it evident, that Mr. *Robe* hath explained himself to my hand, and laid down his stated principle relating to what he calls an imaginary idea, and what he makes the object of it; insomuch that, by *Christ as man,* he cannot be supposed to mean the person of our Mediator denominate by his manhood, in which sense he is the object of faith, and that because,

(1.) He speaks of an imaginary idea of him as man; and, consequently, he speaks of his manhood in the sense wherein it is the object of that imaginary idea; which, he owns, respects only corporeal objects. This he hath frequently asserted in the strongest terms. He lays it down as a position of his, p. 29. *That we can have no imaginary idea of spiritual things; seeing only corporeal things are the object of that faculty and power in man called imagination.* To the same purpose he had said, p. 9. *That spiritual things are no ways the object of this faculty of imagination,* P. 10. 11. *This faculty*

† *Maccovii distinctiones & regulæ theol. & philos. p.* 108. *Persona (Christi) denominatur ab alterutra natura in concreto, ut homo Christus non significat humanitatem tantùm, sed totam personam, humanam, scilicet, & divinam naturam. Christus Deus non significat deitatem tantùm, sed Christum Deum & hominem.*

culty was never designed of God for this purpose, viz. of giving imaginary ideas of God, and spiritual things. P. 24. That there can be no imaginary ideas of spiritual things; these are not the objects about which the imagination can be conversant, neither can it receive any species of them. This was my Judgment, says he, *anent imaginary ideas of spiritual things; and this it continues to be; and you shall never be able to prove the contrary.* How these and the like expressions are reconcileable with some other expressions in his book, will appear afterwards: Only, as to the matter in hand, when Mr. *Robe* speaks of an imaginary idea of Christ as man, it must be a wronging of him, to suppose, that he means any other thing by the object of that idea, than the figure or image of Christ's human body pictured in the brain. He cannot mean what philosophers call *esse personæ*, but *esse substantiæ*. He cannot be supposed to mean the person of Christ; for that is not the object of an imaginary idea, he being thus God as well as man. Yea, he cannot mean the humanity of Christ properly; for that includes soul as well as body, and so must be the object of some other than a mere imaginary idea. But he must mean, according to his own explication of that idea, nothing else but the corporeal substance of Christ's human body; not the soul, but the body; not the man, nor the human nature, but the human substance or corporeal part of that nature: For, as Mr. *Robe* says himself again, p. 55. the imaginary idea cannot extend to the soul. Yea, by his imaginary idea, he cannot mean imagination accompanied with knowledge and understanding, the object whereof are things spiritual and intelligible, as such; for he says, *understanding proceeds, where the imaginary idea ends,* p. 54. Which seems to say, that he owns that it is an idea without knowledge; as indeed it is in itself an idea without rational knowledge, as I shall afterwards shew.

(2.) That Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of Christ as man, instead of importing the person of Christ denominate from his human nature, does plainly exclude the consideration of his person and Godhead, is what he further proves to my hand, by making these the object of some other ideas, though at the same time. Hence, in p. 31. he makes three distinct ideas necessary for thinking upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is God and man, in two distinct natures and one person. "*First,* (says he), I must conceive of him to be true and real man; and this is what is called an imaginary idea of him. *2dly,* I must, by a mere act of my understanding, conceive of him as not only man, but the very true and

" and eternal God. 3*dly*, I must conceive the manhood per-
" sonally united with the Godhead." Here I might quarrel, 1*st*, That there is no word of faith, but only ideas, and acts and conceptions of the natural understanding. 2*dly*, That the glorious object of faith is thus divided, that one part of it may be the object of this idea, and another part the object of another idea; one part of it laid before the sensitive, another part before the intellectual faculty of the soul; as if Christ in his person were divided, and part of the division were conceivable by fancy and imagination, and part of it by a mere act of the understanding; and as if a whole Christ were not the object of faith, but a part of him the object of any man's imaginary idea. This doctrine Mr. *Robe* repeats and confirms, p. 54. where he says, *I must, by one idea, think of him as man, by another as God, and by a third as God and man personally united.* By the by, I may here remark, that, if according to the philosophical account of ideas above, we can have no proper nor immediate idea of any spirit, far less of the infinite God, who is infinitely above our most elevated intellectual conception, then the absurdity of Mr. *Robe*'s rash and bold speeches anent his having an idea of God might be many ways exposed. Though he sometimes says in his letter, that he cannot believe what he hath no idea or conception of; yet here at least he may find himself obliged to believe the being of that God, of whom he can have no direct idea. The light of nature itself, by which we have the natural knowledge of God, teaches us also, that, in knowing we do not know him; and that to have an idea or conception of him, who is inconceiveable, is a contradiction. The learned *De Vries* and *Mastricht*, and other eminent doctors and divines abroad, contend so strenuously against the *Cartesian* doctrine, concerning ideas of God, as leading to imagery and idolatry, that, to me, it appears very dangerous to admit of such ideas.

But my present scope leads me especially here to consider the first member of Mr. *Robe*'s distinction, as above, or the first thing he makes requisite to our thinking of Christ as we ought; namely, to have an imaginary idea of him as man. This, I say, he proves to be no idea of his person or Godhead, by shewing, that these must be conceived by ideas of another kind; intimating thus again, that his imaginary idea excludes all other objects but corporeal; and, consequently, excludes the Godhead and personality of Christ, from being any part of the object of that idea: And hence that idea, so far as it goes, excludes all thoughts of Christ as God, or as

God-

God-man, out of the ſoul, until it have the aſſiſtance of theſe ideas of another kind, to bear company with that imaginary one. Before I go on to the third evidence he gives of this matter, I muſt notice here how Mr. *Robe* hath miſtaken himſelf in his way of ſpeaking which he uſes through his book. For here he ſays, *I muſt conceive of him to be true and real man; and this is what is called an imaginary idea of him.* If here he means, that to conceive of this truth, *That Chriſt is true and real man*, is an imaginary idea of him as man, he hath quite forgot himſelf, or elſe ſpoke what he knew not; for his imaginary idea can have no other but a corporeal object. But no truth whatſoever, divine or human, as it is a truth, can be a corporeal object: And therefore this truth, That Chriſt is a true and real man, cannot be the object of any imaginary idea. A truth may relate, as to the ſubject-matter of it, unto ſome corporeal thing; but a truth, as it is a truth, relate to what it will, is a thing intelligible, that may be the object of knowledge, faith or credit; but cannot be the object of any imaginary idea: For it hath no corporeal form; none can frame any image of it in their brain. But of this more afterwards.

☞ There is a vaſt odds between the truth of that propoſition, *That Chriſt is true man*, and the imaginary idea of a true man. We believe, upon the teſtimony of God, that Chriſt is truly man; and thus his being a true man, is the object of our faith: But, as to the imaginary idea of his being a true man, which Mr. *Robe* makes the firſt thing requiſite to the right thinking of him as God and man in two diſtinct natures, here is a miſerable mixture of faith with fancy. He mixes this conceiving of Chriſt as man, by an imaginary idea, with the conceiving of him as God, and as God-man, by the mere act of the underſtanding; and ſo the faith of his perſon with the fancy of his manhood, as if this fancy were eſſential to faith; which tends to make the faith of Chriſt's manhood nothing but a fancy. Whereas, the true faith of Chriſt's being man, is a thing moſt remote from that imaginary idea or fancy about Chriſt's manhood: For it receives the truth of that propoſition, *That Chriſt is true man*, upon the ſame divine teſtimony that it receives the truth of this, *That he is true God*, and God-man in one perſon. And both theſe truths are received by one and the ſame faculty, namely, ſpiritual underſtanding, or a mind enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt by the word and Spirit of God. To ſeek after any part of the knowledge of Chriſt in our own imaginary idea of him as man, is equally fooliſh as to ſeek the morning-ſtar in a dungeon, or the ſun in a dunghill. How vaſtly

vastly differs the faith of Christ's manhood in the heart, from the fancy of it in the head? By the imaginary idea of it we see, but do not *believe:* and we see nothing but the image of a human body, as it stands in the brain; but by faith we *know* and believe his true humanity, as it is recorded in the Bible, saying, as 1 *John* v. 20. *We know, that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, &c.* Here faith and fancy differs as much, as what is real differs from what is imaginary, and as a heart-persuasion differs from a head-notion. But of these things more afterwards.

I proceed to a third proof and evidence Mr. *Robe* here gives, that, when he speaks of Christ as man, he cannot understand it of the person of Christ denominate from his manhood, in which sense it would be the object of *faith*; but that he means only Christ's human body, as it is the object of an imaginary idea, in which respect it can only be the object of *sense*, not of faith. This he proves, I say, by the following words, in the forecited pages 30 and 31. "We can no more conceive, "and have an idea of Christ in our understandings as man, "but what is called an imaginary idea, or an idea of him in "our minds, by the exercise of our imagination, than we can "of *Enoch* or *Elias*, or any other man who is now in heaven; for this reason, that our Lord's human nature, and, "particularly, his glorified and superexalted body, hath all "the essential properties of any other body, and no other: "And therefore, if we can never think of any other human nature, or human body, through our natural constitution, and "the nature of bodies, but by an imaginary idea, when absent from us, which indeed we cannot, we can never think "of the Mediator as man, and his body now in heaven, by "any other idea, *&c.*" Then he adds, "The plain *Scots* of "what I assert, is, that we cannot think upon Jesus Christ, "as he really is, God-man, without thinking of him as man, "as really as God; and that by the exercise of the same faculties and powers I think and conceive of other men." Here, I must say, appears to me such a heap of gross, absurd, and notional stuff, instead of solid divinity, that, for my part, I would not be the author of it for a whole world. The grossness and absurdity thereof may appear in the following remarks.

First, Here faith and fancy are miserably confounded; the faith of Christ's divine person, as God-man, (which necessarily includes the faith of his humanity), with the fancy of his human body, in the exercise of the same faculties and powers whereby we conceive of other men: And so he makes the hu-

man nature of Christ, not the object of faith at all, but of fancy and imagination. Here it is to be noticed, that the faculties he speaks of are corporeal, as he brings in *Charnock* asserting, *p.* 8. the objects these are conversant about, are only corporeal, as he himself hath declared; and, consequently, they are such as cannot conceive of Christ as man, having, together with a true body, a rational soul; which is no corporeal object, though the chief part of his human nature: And so his corporeal idea, according to himself, cannot conceive of Christ as man, while it conceives only of a human body, which is not the man, but the least part of the human nature. It is hard to think, Mr. *Robe* understood what he wrote, unless he can here be supposed to speak by a figure called *Hendiadys*, that is, when one thing is expressed by two terms; and so, by the human nature of Christ, to mean his human body, and no more; because this only, being corporeal, can be the object of an imaginary idea. But how can this be his meaning, when so frequently he speaks of the human nature of Christ, as not only a true body, but also a reasonable soul? Yet Mr. *Robe* here speaks of the human nature, or the human body, as if these two were alternatives, and could equally be the objects of an imaginary idea; and speaks of the idea of Christ's *human body*, as if it were the same with the idea of his *human nature*: Whereas the human nature includes the human soul, as well as the human body. And he elsewhere declares and maintains, that neither the human soul, or any spirit, can be the object of an imaginary idea; and yet here he says, Christ's human nature can be conceived by no other but an imaginary idea. It cannot be said with any good sense, either that the human nature is a soul, or that the human nature is a body; for human nature consists of soul and body unite. It cannot be said, man is a soul, or man is a body; because these are the integral parts of a man, and the union of these together constitutes the man or the human nature: And therefore, to conceive of them thus united, requires some other than an imaginary idea; which can have no other than the corporeal part to be the object of it. The soul, being spiritual, cannot be the object of that imaginative faculty. I know not how many times I have this absurdity to notice in Mr. *Robe*'s pamphlet; as will appear afterwards.

Second remark. He here debases the human nature of Christ, as an object no otherwise discernible, than the same way that we discern any other man in heaven or in the earth. Thus, it is only Mr. *Robe*, not Mr. *Erskine*, that makes the human nature of Christ not the object of faith. For, unless he makes

Enoch

Enoch and *Elias* in heaven, or any other man on earth, the object of his faith, equally with Christ as man, he must have some other way of thinking on Christ as man, than he hath of thinking on them; though I own an imaginary idea can think no otherwise of Christ as man, than it does of other men. It forms a picture of their bodies in the brain, even as it does the picture of Christ's body. He can think no otherwise of other men, than to think they are persons: For to think of a man, and not of a human person, is impossible; for none can think of a nature without a subject, or a human nature without a human person, wherein that nature exists; (of which more afterwards): Even so, the imaginary idea of Christ as man, or in his human nature, as Mr. *Robe* speaks, necessarily makes him at best think of a human person. And here is the very root and spring of old *Nestorianism*, making Christ to have two persons, a human and a divine, as well as two natures. Mr. *Robe* may profess this is not his principle, that Christ is a human person: If so, then he must deny his present doctrine, namely, that he can have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, in the manner and way he thinks of other men. Why, he thinks truly and rightly of other men; because, as men, they are persons: But he thinks falsely of Christ as man; because, as man, he is no person. Therefore his fancy of Christ, as man, is indeed but a fancy. One may feed himself with the vain and vile notion of Christ as man; but I can venture to say, as a minister of Christ, that he never saw Christ's human nature by faith, nor ever had a right thought of it, who never could think of it but as he thinks of other men.

Third remark. He here declares, that, when he thinks of Christ as man, it is by the exercise of the same faculties and powers by which he thinks or conceives of other men. Here is as gross and carnal doctrine, when not cautioned nor guarded, as ever I read of; though it is agreeable enough to the doctrine of imaginary ideas in divinity. The powers and faculties of the soul, by which true believers see Christ to be man, are the same with these by which they see him to be God, and to be God-man in one person: And these are not merely natural, but the powers and faculties of a new nature, renewed by the power of divine grace, giving spiritual illumination and saving faith: For *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; for they are spiritually discerned.* It is true, as *Charnock* says, *vol. ii. p. 72. 73.* "Regeneration is not a removal of the old substance or faculties of the soul;—but the soul is so much

" changed,—that it is, as it were, a new ſoul, a new under-
" ſtanding, a new will.—The change is ſo great, that the
" ſoul ſeems to be of another *ſpecies* and kind; becauſe it is
" acted by that *grace* which is another ſpecies from that prin-
" ciple which acted it before. New creation is called a reſurre-
" ction. Our Saviour in his reſurrection had the ſame body,
" but endued with a new quality. – So, though the eſſence of
" the ſoul and faculties remain the ſame, yet another kind of
" light is darted in, and other qualities implanted.—'Tis not
" a change of the eſſential acts of the ſoul, as acts;—but the
" principle, end, and objects of theſe acts, ariſing from theſe
" reſtored qualities, are altered.—As, when a man walks to
" the Eaſt or Weſt, 'tis the ſame motion in body and joints;
" —yet they are contrary motions, becauſe the terms to
" which they tend, are contrary one to the other."—Such indeed are the different, yea, and contrary motions and objects of the ſoul's acts, when it has the natural notion and imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, and when it has the ſpiritual view of him as Immanuel God-man. They differ juſt as much as the natural ſight of a man in our nature, by the eye of ſenſe or fancy differs from the ſupernatural ſight of God in our nature, by the eye of faith, and ſpiritual underſtanding. They that never ſaw the man Chriſt in any other light, nor by any other means, than by the ſame powers and faculties whereby they ſee or think of other men, whether preſent or abſent, are yet groſsly ignorant of Chriſt. They that by faith ſee Chriſt to be man, they by the ſame faith ſee him to be God, and they ſee God in him: *For he that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*, ſays Chriſt. It is true, Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks alſo of Chriſt's being God, and God-man in one perſon, and makes theſe the objects of a more pure intellectual idea, though he makes Chriſt as man the object of an imaginary idea. But this will by no means bring him out of the miry clay and horrible pit of ignorance and abſurdity, into which he hath fallen by this new doctrine of notional and ideal religion. For, as the intellectual powers of nature can no more bring any man to the ſaving knowledge of God, than imaginary ideas can bring him to the right knowledge of Chriſt's human nature; ſo this human nature of Chriſt was never ſeen or known to any ſaving advantage, but by the ſame ſupernatural powers and ſpiritual faculties whereby we ſee him to be God, and to be God-man in one perſon: For it is not in *one* light we ſee Chriſt as man; and in *another* as God; and in a *third* as God-man in one perſon; but in one and the ſame light we ſee the glorious perſon of our Immanuel God-man, when

when *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face*, or person, *of Christ*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. *Gal.* i. 16. *John* i. 14. We know not Christ savingly to be the *Son of man*, but by the same spirit whereby we know him to be the *Son of God*, namely, by *the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, Eph. i. 17. And, till *God give us an understanding to know him that is true*, we know not *that the Son of God is come* in our nature, or that he is true man, any more than we know that *he is the true God and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20. Both these are seen in one and the same *light* of the Word and Spirit of God, and by one and the same *eye* of faith and saving knowledge, which looks to the person God-man; not to his *manhood*, as Mr. *Robe* supposes, *with one eye*, namely, an imaginary idea, and to his *Godhead* and personality, *with another eye*, namely, an intellectual idea. Which, from what I have said, appears to be most unscriptural doctrine, or rather antiscriptural, especially when the human nature of Christ, that Mr. *Robe* makes the object of faith, is such a humanity as we can as easily conceive of, as we can conceive of any other man out of sight. I am confident, they that never saw the human nature of Christ in any other light, never believed it, nor had any view of it, as the object of faith. Yea, it were as unlawful to make that imaginary Christ the object of their faith, as it is unlawful and idolatrous to make any other man the object of faith. God will not be mocked with our dreams and head-notions; nor will he give his glory to another.

It is true, Mr. *Robe*, in his tripartite division of ideas above mentioned, says, "That, if any of them be wanting, "it is not such an idea of the Mediator God-man, as should "be." But, as each of these ideas are mere philosophical notions, and one may have them all, and yet want the saving knowledge of Christ; so it is plain, that the first of these, namely, the imaginary idea of Christ as man, can at best, even according to Mr. *Robe*, go no farther than the notion of a mere man; such as, *Enoch* or *Elias*, whom he instances. And, seeing to make a mere man the object of faith, is gross idolatry, therefore to make that imaginative faculty, which was never designed for conceiving any other but objects of sense, to be one of these faculties whereby we are to conceive the object of faith, is gross divinity, leading directly to the foresaid gross idolatry; because that imaginary idea (whatever other idea it is supposed to be followed with) can see no farther about Christ than a mere man; nay, not so far; for

for it can conceive of no more but a human body, a mere corporeal object; under which consideration it is an object of sense, but not of faith; an object of carnal imagination, but not of divine worship, any more than the body of *Enoch* or *Elias* in heaven, objected to our imagination on earth. Yea, to worship Christ's human body, as represented by such an imaginary idea, is the same thing with worshipping a dead idol, or a molten image, instead of an incarnate God; who alone is the object of saving faith and divine worship.

Mr. *Robe*'s threefold idea that he makes necessary for a right thought of Christ, and consequently to right believing, and whereof his first is the imaginary idea of Christ as man, seems, from what is said, to want a necessary addition, which would make it fourfold, namely, an intellectual idea of Christ's human soul; for the imaginary idea, according to his own acknowledgment, respects only corporeal or bodily things. But yet, after all, none of all these four, either separately or jointly, make up a right thought of Christ, I mean, a spiritual thought of him; nor do they all amount to a believing on the Son of God: For they all belong, partly to fancy, notion, speculation, and, at best, human ratiocination; or partly to some branch of natural philosophy, illuminated with objective scripture-revelation; and are all of them obvious to any man that reads the Bible, and hath the right exercise of reason and of his natural faculties. But faith acts in another sphere; the subject of it being a man or woman whose mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, by the word and Spirit of God, and whose natural powers are renewed and spiritualized. Hence, none ever received Christ by believing on his name, unless they were *born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God.* Then, and not till then, can they say, *The word was made flesh; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,* John i. 12, 13, 14. Hence we are taught also, that *none can come to Christ* by faith or believing, *except the Father draw them:* which the Father does by his effectual teaching: *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto the Son.* And again, Christ says, *No man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of my Father,* John vi. 44, 45. 65.

I might produce a fourth evidence of this, that, when Mr. *Robe* speaks of Christ as man, he cannot understand it of the person of Christ, the object of faith, denominate from his

man-

manhood; because, as he makes Christ as man, only the object of an imaginary idea, so he makes that idea of Christ as man, to be a naked and simple idea, distinct from the idea of him as Mediator God-man, which he makes not a simple, but a complex idea. For, p. 54. having said, "Where the imaginary idea ends, the understanding proceeds, &c." he adds, "The idea we have of the Mediator God-man in two "natures and one person, when it is adequate, as the subject is capable to have of the object, is not a simple but "complex idea, consisting of ideas distinct and different "in their natures, as the two natures of the glorious Mediator." Hence it is evident, his imaginary idea of Christ as man, being both distinct and different in its nature from, and prior or previous to that complex idea, which includes the whole person of Christ, is, according to him, a naked simple idea of sensation, respecting what is merely sensible and corporeal; and so can in itself include no consideration of a the person of Christ, or of the proper object of faith. Such naked simple idea can surely judge no way of any truth or falshood. Hence the foreign divines and philosophers, as *De Vries* and *Mastricht*†, in their disputes against the sceptick notions of the *Cartesian* writers, (who, in favours of their innate ideas of all things, made the senses of little other use in men, than in brutes, destitute, as of reason, so of these ideas; and judging the senses so fallacious, as no way to be trusted, no judgment to be formed of any truth by them;) when, in answer hereunto, they assert the senses to be judges, and their testimony to be necessary to the knowledge and faith of truths relating to sensible things, they at the same time assert, that the senses cannot properly judge or reason, affirm or deny any thing; and that therefore by senses they do not mean *naked* senses, but the *prudent use* of the senses, resulting from the *rational* soul; whereof brutes are destitute, tho' they have both sense and perception: Which also is there proven against the *Cartesians, cap.* 30. Now, while Mr. *Robe* makes only the perception of Christ as God-man, to be a complex intellectual idea, but the perception of Christ as man, to be a simple idea of sensation or imagination, distinct from, and going before that which is complex and intellectual, it is plain, that that *naked* sense or *simple* imagination, thus destitute of understanding, reason, and reflexion, in itself can by no means include the rational knowledge of any truth whatsoever, far less of the object of faith. The sense and perception of brutes may be brought in to compare with any naked

† *Gangræna Cart. cap.* 29.

naked or simple sensitive apprehension, not under the rule and conduct of a rational soul, and the intellectual faculty thereof.

CHAP. II.

FOR the further clearing of this subject, I proposed, in the *second* place, to speak of the glorious person of our Immanuel God-man, and the mysterious constitution thereof; so as it may appear, that the humanity therein now subsisting can be the object of faith only, not of fancy, or any imaginary idea.

Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh; so great, that not only natural sense and imagination, but natural reason and philosophy, are quite vain and insufficient for helping us rightly to conceive any part of this mystery. Philosophy is to be heard and regarded, when it declares the dictates of right reason concerning things that are subject to it: But, when it begins to judge about the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, or any other thing that belongs to faith, it is to be exploded; because, in these things that are above the reach of reason, and depend only upon divine revelation, it brings in nothing solid or true, but discovers itself to be vain and deceitful, *Col.* ii. 8. and that because, as the same Apostle says, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are only known to the Spirit of God.* The Apostle, in that forecited text, does not indeed condemn philosophy, but only the vanity and errors of philosophers; (for, as the errors of divines do not belong to *divinity*, as *parts*, but as *pests* of it, so neither do the errors and vanities of philosophers belong to *philosophy*): But yet a philosopher, as such, is nothing else but *animalis homo*, a natural man †; and reason itself, not enlightened by faith, belongs to that animality: Therefore it is not possible it can reach towards saving knowledge; or, if it attempts to do so, it evanishes into bubbles or trifles. Nor needs this seem strange: For, if brute animals, which judge exceeding well concerning things that belong to *sense*, as of meat and drink, yet cannot judge of *human* affairs; then, by the same parity of reason, men, though they can determine what is right and good about human affairs, by the benefit of natural *reason*, or the light of nature; yet they cannot thereby judge of things *divine* or *supernatural*. There is a manifold abuse of natural reason

† See *Davenant* on *Col. p.* 237.

reason and philosophy; as, (1.) When men attempt to deduce the very foundations of religion from rational principles. For, though the principles of right reason are true in themselves; yet thence it cannot be drawn, what we shall judge concerning the incarnation of Christ, the Trinity, &c. which are to be deduced from higher principles, namely, from the revealed will of God in the word. *Reason is a power discursive from principles to conclusions*; but it hath not in itself the principles of these things which are apprehended by faith. Therefore, for men to build here upon the sand of their own natural principles, is both impudence and imprudence. (2.) It is also an abuse of natural reason and philosophy, when it opposes its principles, which are true in the order of nature, to the principles of theology, which are far above nature. For example, It is true, That *nothing cannot be produced out of nothing: That quite different and divers species cannot be united in the same subject*, and the like: But these are to be understood according to the course of nature, and the power of a finite agent. Therefore these philosophers err, who would thence conclude against the creation of the world, or the incarnation of God; which the scripture declares are done, not by the power of natural causes, but by the omnipotent power of God. Hence, it is a good rule †, theology never contradicted right natural reason, but oftimes it exceeds it; and so seems to oppose it: For right reason says not absolutely, that these things cannot be, but that they cannot be by any finite power; which theology also declares. In things therefore of that nature ‡, let reason submit to revelation, as *Hagar* to *Sarah*. Let it suffer itself to be admonished and corrected: But, if it will not obey, then cast out the maid-servant, the bond-woman, *Gal.* iv. 30. Now, all this must be said even of natural reason and human understanding: How much more must sense and natural imagination be rejected and cast out, when it is brought in, under the strange term of an imaginary idea of Christ as man, to be helpful to the right knowledge and understanding of this great mystery of godliness, an incarnate God. But, again, (3.) Reason and philosophy turn useless and hurtful to religion, when men obtrude their errors, sometimes deduced by false consequences from true principles; as if these errors were lawful or native conclusions. Thus many, under the name of philosophers, have taught the dreams and visions of their own head. On this account, some of the fathers bitterly reproved the ancient

† *Thomæ quæst. disp. de fide, art.* 10. See *Daveneut* in *Col. p.* 239.
‡ *Clem. Strom.* 1.

hereticks, and cried out both againſt philoſophy and philoſophers, particularly *Tertullian* ‡; who ſays, "They affect the "truth: But, in affecting, they corrupt it; that, by the wit "of philoſophers, all hereſy is animated and enlivened; and "that all the dictates of hereticks, when they freeze and cannot "fly, they find to themſelves a ſeat and reſt in the thickets "of *Ariſtotle*." But this is to be ſaid, not of true and ſober philoſophy, remaining within its own ſphere, but of that wanton and deceitful learning, under the name of philoſophy, which vents the opinions of private men for the dictates of truth itſelf, and ventures to mix itſelf with things above its reach.

The caution the Apoſtle *Paul* gives againſt vain philoſophy, *Col.* ii. 8. is premiſed to the moſt notable account he gives of the perſon of Chriſt in the following verſe. And this is the occaſion of my having premiſed theſe things on that ſubject, before I come to ſpeak of the glorious perſon of Chriſt: For, if vain philoſophy and carnal reaſonings muſt be excluded, not only as uſeleſs, but hurtful, in contemplating this wonderful object, much more muſt vain fancy and carnal imagination be ſo. If this myſtery exceeds the rational and intellectual powers of nature, much more muſt every part of it exceed the ſenſitive and corporeal powers of men; which relate only to things outwardly viſible and corporeal, but to nothing intelligible and ſpiritual.

The glory of Chriſt's perſon is deſcribed, *Col.* ii. 9. in theſe words, *In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*; that is, the whole Deity, and all the attributes of God, dwelleth in Chriſt perſonally, by virtue of the hypoſtatical or perſonal union of the divine with the human nature of Chriſt. Here, to follow the learned *Davenant*, he ſhews how the word *bodily* is to be underſtood *perſonally*; becauſe, as ſouls are ſometimes put for perſons, as in theſe words, *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die*, that is, the perſon; and we read of *Jacob*'s kindred, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls, that is, perſons; ſo bodies are ſometimes put for perſons; as, when it is ſaid, *Some body hath touched me*, that is, ſome perſon; ſo here *bodily*, that is, perſonally. The eternal Son of God did ſo join the human nature to himſelf, as that the perſon of the λόγος, the Word, which ſubſiſted before only in the divine nature, now ſubſiſts alſo in the human; which never had a diſtinct perſonality of its own, but was aſſumed or taken into the divine perſon of the Son in Chriſt. Therefore, there are not two perſons, one of man, the other of the Son of God: But the

‡ See *Davenant* in *Col. p.* 239.

the divine nature is so unite to the human, that therein it subsists bodily, that is, hypostatically. Hence the son of *David* is called JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, *Jer.* xxiii. 5. 6. and, *God blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. The eternal Son of God became man, not by assuming the person, but the nature of man. Man is said to be assumed, because the human soul and body was assumed. The person of man is not said to be assumed, because that soul and body was not united to one another in a person, before they were united to the person of the Son of God. The human nature of Christ, then, hath no personality in itself: The person of our Immanuel is no other than the second person of the glorious Trinity; the *Word* that was made flesh. Hence, it is argued among schoolmen, whether the person of Christ, after his incarnation, is compounded. But this they assert, not in respect of *parts*, as if the person of Christ was now composed of a divine and human nature, as of parts; but in respect of *number*, because now it subsists of two natures, which, before the incarnation, subsisted only in the divine. Nor does this militate against the immutability of Christ's divine nature and person: For there was here no *real* change in him, but a *relative* one. As God, who from all eternity was not the creator, yet in time became a creator; this new relation of God to the creature, which he brought from nothing to being, made no change in God, but in the creature: So the Son of God, who was not man, nor incarnate from all eternity, being made man and incarnate in time, this made no change in him; because the change is made in the human nature, which was assumed, not in the divine, that did assume. The Son of God was not man, nor incarnate, while he did not yet actually assume the human nature: But he is said to be man, and incarnate, in so far as he gave that nature a subsistence in his own divine person. But this he did, not by changing his divine nature, but by uniting to himself that human nature. To become man absolutely, imports a real change in the subject acquiring the human nature, as when man was made of the dust; because the subject that was made man, lost its former nature. But, when the person of the Son of God became man, and was incarnate, this is not understood to be, by any new transmutation or change of the divine nature; but the Word was made flesh, by uniting to himself the human nature, not by changing the divine nature.

It hath been objected, That, if the human nature of Christ subsists in the person of the Son of God, and not in its own proper personality, then the man Christ is more imperfect

than all other men; becauſe all other men are human perſons, or have a human perſonality,, and are (*ſuppoſita*, or) ſubjects ſubſiſting in that nature: And only Chriſt, as he is man, hath not this perſonality, but ſubſiſts in a divine perſon, the λόγος, by hypoſtatical union. *Anſwer*, That the proper perſonality of the human nature is not wanting on account of the *defect* of ſome things requiſite to its perfection; but on account of the *addition* of ſome things which far excells its nature; namely, on account of its union to the divine perſon. Chriſt therefore is not more imperfect, but more perfect, excellent and eminent than other men; becauſe, whereas, in us, our human nature ſubſiſts in its own proper perſonality, in Chriſt it ſubſiſts in a divine: And to ſubſiſt in God by a hypoſtatical union, is much more noble and eminent than to ſubſiſt in itſelf. Now, a man that is not a human perſon, having no perſonality, but that of the eternal Son of God, or a human nature ſubſiſting in that manner, is ſuch a myſterious object as tranſcends the moſt capacious underſtanding of men or angels. By *faith* only we believe this myſtery; by *reaſon* we cannot comprehend it. Intellectual powers of human nature cannot conceive of a human nature thus ſubſiſting; what then can corporeal powers or *imaginary ideas* do? To conceive of human nature otherwiſe than thus ſubſiſting in the divine perſon of the Son of God, and to think it the human nature of Chriſt, is, to conceive a falſhood, a lie. Of which more afterwards.

The human nature of Chriſt conſiſts of a true body and a reaſonable ſoul; and yet as man he is not a perſon. The reaſon is, becauſe the ſame moment wherein his ſoul was created, and his body conceived, they were unite to the Divinity. If they had exiſted ſeparately from the λόγος, the *Word*, they would have had their own human perſonality; but, becauſe they at once began to be, and to be united to the eternal Word, this humanity neceſſarily behoved to ſubſiſt in the perſon of the Word that was made fleſh, or that aſſumed the human nature; and the divinity being incomparably more excellent than the humanity, therefore is the human nature aſſumed into perſonality with it. Two objections of hereticks may here be touched at, for farther illuſtration of the myſtery.

1. If in Chriſt dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, then the *Samoſatenians*, and others that deny the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead, alledge, that we will be obliged to admit, that all the three perſons of the Trinity were incarnate; becauſe the plenitude of the Deity dwells in Chriſt incarnate, the whole and perfect divine eſſence dwells in him. *Anſwer*. The

The whole divine nature was incarnate, not because incarnate in all the persons; but because in the person of the Son there is nothing wanting of the perfection of the divine nature: For, seeing the divine nature or essence is spiritual, there can not be, nor can it be supposed, that there are parts thereof; but, wherever the divine nature is, there it is wholly and perfectly: Therefore the whole divine nature was incarnate; but not in so far as it is considered absolutely, and in itself, as common to all the persons; but in so far as it is limited by personal property, or in the person of the Son. *Una persona est totus Deus, Luth. tom.* 2. But it is urged, The works of the glorious Trinity are undivided; and therefore, if the second person assumed the human nature, the Father and the Spirit did the same; and, consequently, not the Son only, but the three persons were incarnate. To which it is *answered*, To assume flesh, imports two things, namely, the *action* itself, or unition of that flesh, and the *term* or limit of this action, namely, the person to which this flesh is unite or adapted. The former, namely, the *action*, is common to the three persons; for the Father and the Holy Ghost did jointly work and operate the incarnation of Christ: But the latter, namely, the *term* and *limit* of that action, belongs only to the Son; for the whole Trinity adapted that flesh to him alone. If a father give a wife to his Son, and the Son join her in marriage to himself, both are rightly said to have made the marriage; but with this difference, that the father coupled the bride to the son, but the son took her to himself. Even so, in the incarnation of Christ, each person wrought out this conjunction of the human nature with the divine, but so as the Father married the Son to our nature, and the Son betrothed it to himself. As therefore, in the foresaid example, it is not the father, but the son that is said to be married, though the will and work of both the father and the son concurs in the contriving and making that marriage; so here, it is not the Father but the Son that is incarnate; though both concur in the making and uniting that flesh to the person of the Son. And what is said of the Father, is also to be understood of the Holy Spirit. Hence, in scripture, as it said only of the *Word*, that *he was made flesh*, John i. 14. yet the work of incarnation is ascribed to the whole Trinity. Of the *Father* it is said, he *prepared his salvation*, Luke ii. 31. Heb. x. 5. Christ says, *A body hast thou prepared me*; of the *Son* it is said, that *he took on him the seed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. and of the *Holy Ghost* it is said, that he *overshadowed* the *Virgin*, Luke i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest*

eſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God. Here is room and ground for faith; but no footing for fancy and carnal imagination.

2. It is objected, If the human nature of Chriſt be hypoſtatically united to the divine, then the whole human nature is unite to the whole divine nature; which, being ſpiritual, is not diviſible into parts; and, if ſo, then wherever the divine nature is, there is the human, and, conſequently, we paſs into the camp of the *Ubiquitarians*. *Anſwer*. The conſequence is denied; becauſe the perſonal union is conſtitute, ſo as the properties of both natures are preſerved. It is the property of the human nature, to be circumſcribed within certain limits; and it does not loſe this property by union to a nature that is infinite: For, when the natures unite are not proportionable, they are not made ſo by the perſonal union; becauſe the union only joins, but does not change the natures: Since, therefore, a finite nature and an infinite are not proportionable; neither is the divine nature circumſcribed, nor the human infinitely extended, by that perſonal union. The human nature is indeed inſeparably unite to the divine, and the divine nature is no where ſeparate from the human; not that the humanity is in every place, where the divinity is, by local poſition, but that, by a real and hypoſtatical union, it is joined to that divinity which exiſts every where. The union or conjunction is circumſcribed by no ſpace of places; becauſe it conſiſts in this, that the Deity ſuſtains the humanity as its own, and gives ſubſiſtence thereunto. And ſo the eternal Word, exiſting in heaven, in the earth, and every where, ſuſtains the humanity exiſting only in heaven; but the actual poſition of Chriſt's body is included within a certain ſpace, becauſe the nature of a body requires that. Some illuſtrate this by the example of the ſun and the ſolar ſphere: For, as the ſun is, inſeparably unite to its orb; yet notwithſtanding it agrees not with the globe of the ſun, to be at the ſame time in the Eaſt and in the Weſt; ſo the humanity of Chriſt is inſeparably unite to the divinity, yet it follows not thence that it is wherever the divinity is. But it may be alledged, that the ſun is not unite to its orb in whole, but in part only; but the humanity is unite to the whole Word, that was made fleſh. It is acknowledged, that in this the example is not ſimilar; but yet this makes for the greater confirmation of this truth. For every ſpiritual nature, wherever it is, it wholly is; becauſe it is indiviſible, and its totality is conſidered in reſpect of perfect eſſence, not in reſpect of extended quantity.

The

The eternal Word therefore, in regard of its *spirituality*, is whole and wholly in the human nature, which is united thereunto; nor can this attribute of spirituality be divided or parted. The same Word, in regard of its *infinity*, is alike, without the human nature, whole and wholly; nor can his immensity be included within such narrow bounds and limits. But, whether the Word that was made flesh, be considered in or without the human nature joined together with it, it no where exists ununited to the human nature; because it every where sustains it, as its own.

Christ, as to his human nature thus subsisting in his divine person, is said now to be sitting at the right hand of God, *Col.* iii. 2. and at the right hand of the Majesty on high, *Heb.* i. 3. Hence, some modern divines, particularly *Lutherans*, in support of consubstantiation, have greatly erred, by supposing there is a real communication of the divine majesty, ubiquity, and all other idioms and attributes of the Deity, to the human nature of Christ; because the right hand of God and his divine Majesty is every where. But this may be soon refuted; because, if these divine perfections were really communicate to the human nature, then the human nature would be really God. But, tho' the Word made flesh be equal in glory and majesty with God the Father; yet the flesh or human nature of Christ cannot have these divine properties, because it is not consubstantial with God, though hypostatically united to God. The man Christ's sitting at the right hand of God is a step of the exaltation of Christ's human nature, which followed in order of time after his passion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven; and believers are called by faith to follow him thither, and set their affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and not upon things on earth, which Christ, as to his bodily presence, hath left; tho', as to his spiritual presence and divine majesty, he hath said, *Lo I am with you always.* Therefore, tho' the right hand of God is every where, if by it we understand the divine majesty and power, because God is every where; yet Christ, as to his body and human nature, is placed at the right hand of God, not as he is every where, but as he is in heaven. " *The hearts of kings are in the hand* " *of God*; are the hearts of kings every where, because God's " hand is every where? *The souls of the righteous are in the* " *hand of God*; are their souls therefore every where? The " right hand of God is from eternity; is the humanity of " Christ therefore from eternity? The right hand of God made " the world; did the humanity of Christ therefore make " heaven and earth? The humanity of Christ must not then be

" con-

" confounded with the divinity, be the same with it, not unite to it." *Charnock, vol.* 1. *p.* 250. 251. The *Ubiquitarian* doctrine is sufficiently refuted, by what the angel said to the women at the sepulchre, when they were seeking after the body of Christ, *Math.* xxviii. 6. *He is not here: For he is risen: come, see the place where the Lord lay.* If it had been true that his body was every where, it could not be truly said, *He is not here.* But here, by the by, it may be inquired, What is all this to the story of Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary ideas? *Ans.* Tho' I may afterward shew, how his making Christ's human body the proper object of faith (as well as of a sensitive idea) borders upon the *Ubiquitarian* doctrine consequentially; since Christ as the proper object of faith is every where: Yet, at present, I shall, in this digression, so far anticipate what I may afterward further illustrate, as to notice the inconsistency of his imaginary doctrine with that forecited scripture, *Math.* xxviii. 6. Where, tho, the angel speaks of Christ's body, yet not as it is the object of an imaginary idea; for he speaks of the person of Christ denominate by his body, saying, HE *is not here:* HE *is risen*; *come, see the place where the* LORD *lay.* Three times with one breath his personality is mentioned; as it were of purpose to lead them instantly off from all vain imaginary ideas about his body, and from what was the proper object only of sense, to the proper object of faith, the person of Christ. No figure is more ordinary than that whereby a person is denominate from that which cannot be supposed to be a person, but a body, or a part of the body, as I shewed above. Thus, a person may be denominated from the very dust of his body in the grave; as, when it is said, Here lies such a man, such a woman, such a person; and yet the dust is no person. But, when a person is denominate by it, then that person thus denominated is the object of the *understanding* or *intellect*, while the dust is but the object of *sense* or *imagination.* Now, Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine says, none can believe what the angel here said, without an imaginary idea of a body, a grave, a place where that body lay. Well, but what is that to the purpose of faith or spiritual understanding? These are not the objects of faith, but of sense; and sense must indeed perceive what belongs to sense. But these ideas of sensation belong no more to faith, than earth does to heaven. The angel here directs them to truths, that are objects of faith, *viz.* (1.) That Christ was not there, *viz.* bodily. (2.) That he is risen. (3.) That there was the place where the Lord lay. None of these, as they are truths, can be the objects of sense and imagination;

but

but only of knowledge and faith, as may be cleared afterward. But to return to my discourse about the person of Christ:

When Christ became man, he did not become another person than he was before, but assumed our nature into his former personality. O mysterious! When it is said, Christ became like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, if it be said, Christ did not become a human person as we are; therefore he did not become like unto us in all things. *Answer.* The word must be understood of his becoming like unto us in all things relating to the human nature, and the whole substance thereof soul and body; but personality is the manner of the subsistence of that nature in itself, or in another. And in this God was pleased mercifully to alter the course of nature with reference to Christ's humanity. Lest it should be surprising to the inconsiderate readers, to hear that Christ as man is no person, and that they who saw Christ on the earth only with the eye of flesh, and not with the eye of faith, they saw not the person of Christ, they only saw a body which was not the object of faith, but of sense; in the propriety of speech; it will perhaps be requisite, that I explain this matter a little more, before I go further. Therefore,

That Christ assumed not the person of man, but man's nature only, is evident. Christ did not assume a nature *personated*, but one *individuated*, as the learned express it, and which never had an existence in itself, but in another subject, namely, his own divine person. If Christ had assumed man's person, then either he assumed a pre-existent person, which in the assumption remained a person, or a pre-existent person, which in the assumption ceased to be a person.

But, as to the *first*, That Christ assumed a human person, which in the assumption ceased not to be a person, but remained so, is both false and impossible. That it is false, appears from this, that the human nature in Christ is not a person, otherwise there would be in Christ two persons; which is false and erroneous; for in him, the same which is the person of God, is the person of man; otherwise what is said of the Son of God, could not be said of the Son of man, nor what is said of the Son of man, could be said of the Son of God; and, consequently, it would also follow, that the virgin *Mary* did not conceive and bear a son, who was *Immanuel, God with us*, or a child, whose name was *the Mighty God*. (2.) But, as it is false, so it is impossible, that Christ assumed a human person, which, notwithstanding the assumption, ceased not to be a person; because it is impossible, that a human nature can be a

perſon, and yet not exiſt in itſelf at once, but only in another ſubject: For hence, if the human nature of Chriſt were a perſon, or a nature exiſting in a created perſon, then the perſon of the Son of God could not be the ſubject or perſon thereof; for it is impoſſible for the ſame whole created nature to be at once immediately in more ſubjects than one, in the ſame mode or manner wherein a nature is in a ſubject; more eſpecially, if one of theſe ſubjects be uncreated, and another created. It is evident then, that Chriſt aſſumed not a pre-exiſtent perſon, which, notwithſtanding the aſſumption, remained a perſon.

Secondly, Nor did Chriſt aſſume a pre-exiſtent perſon, which, in the aſſumption thereof, ceaſed to be a perſon: For anent this we may ſay, that it is not impoſſible, but that it is falſe. (1.) I ſay, it is not impoſſible; becauſe we may well ſuppoſe, that it is poſſible for God to make a nature that ſubſiſted in itſelf as a ſubject, to ſubſiſt in another ſubject than itſelf, without deſtroying the nature; becauſe a created eſſence exiſting in itſelf, or in another, depends not upon that eſſence, but upon the divine will: He can make that created ſubſtance, which he willed to exiſt in itſelf as its ſubject, to exiſt in a divine ſubject, and not in itſelf. Therefore, ſuppoſe the human nature of Chriſt, before it was aſſumed, had actually exiſted in itſelf; yet, by the divine will, it could have been made to exiſt actually in a divine ſubject, as it now does. Some have objected, That no creature can exiſt but in itſelf, as its ſubject; becauſe its exiſting thus in itſelf, imports no more but its relation to its efficient cauſe, by which it formally exiſts in itſelf: Therefore, while that creature remains, it cannot poſſibly be ſeparated from that relation it hath to its efficient, and ſo, without the deſtruction of the creature's ſubſiſtence, cannot but exiſt in itſelf. To which it is anſwered, That, though the created ſubſtance remaining, there cannot be removed from it, by any power whatſoever, all the relation it hath to its efficient cauſe, ſeeing a creature exiſting in itſelf as its ſubject, is only God's cauſing it to exiſt ſo; yet it is poſſible, by a divine power, that what relates neceſſarily to the efficient cauſe one way, may relate to the ſame another way. One relation to its efficient cauſe may be ſeparated from it, and another relation given. Hence, if God ſhould make a created ſubſtance exiſting in *itſelf* as its ſubject, to exiſt in *himſelf* as its ſubject, in the way wherein the human nature of Chriſt exiſts, then, after the aſſumption, it would only be otherwiſe related to the efficient cauſe than before; the ſame cauſe making that which it before made to exiſt in itſelf, to exiſt in another. But, though thus

it,

it may be supposed to be not impossible for Christ to have assumed a pre-existent person, which in the assumption thereof would cease to be a person, so as no more to subsist in itself; yet, (2.) It is false, that he assumed a pre-existent person, which upon its assumption ceased to be a person. Some have attempted to prove the falshood of this, by saying, that this would not have been an assumption of our nature, but a consumption of it. But this reason is not valid; because the Son of God might have assumed (say some) one man actually pre-existing, without ruining his nature, though that nature had ceased to exist in a created person; for hence there had been no consumption of that nature, but the sublimation or exalting of it. But the true reason why the human nature of Christ was never a person, is, because it never existed in itself. Christ assumed man's nature, not man's person. A person is something existing in itself: *Persona est per se una*, or, *per se sonans*. But the human nature assumed by the eternal Word never existed in itself, because it was formed and assumed at once. As divines speak of the soul's creation, and infusion into the body, *that in its creation it is infused, and in its infusion it is created*; so it may be said of our human nature, when assumed by the Son of God, that in the assumption it was made or formed, and in the formation it was assumed: Insomuch as if it were to be supposed, that the Son of God, the second person of the glorious Trinity, should lay aside his human nature; then that human nature would neither be a person, nor could subsist in itself, unless there was a present divine influence for the preservation of it, that it might subsist in itself, otherwise it would wholly cease to be †. But now that divine influence is not given to it for that end, that it may subsist in itself, but for this end, that it may exist in an infinitely more worthy and glorious subject than itself; that is, in the eternal Word: And therefore, on a double account, it is not a person; because a person both exists by itself, and is not unite to a higher than itself; but Christ's human nature does not exist by itself, although it be unite to a higher than itself by a personal union. Therefore this human nature of Christ is no person. Though the human nature assumed by the eternal Word, had all the essentials of human nature, as other men have, and, by the essential principles of human nature, that nature in every other man is a person; yet it does not follow, that therefore the human nature of Christ is a person; because

† *De Vries determ. ontol. p.* 57. Substantia est ens per se existens: i. e. cujus ea est in existendo sufficientia, ut alio, cui ceu subjecto insit, non indigeat.

in him there is no divine influence present for making that human nature exist in itself, but in himself: But, in other men, this influence is always present for making them exist in themselves. If the human nature assumed, had pre-existed before the hypostatical union, it would have been a person, and the Son of God could have assumed it into personal union: But then, by that assumption, he would have removed from it the ground and reason of created personality, by removing from it the first influence necessary for its existing in itself, and making it to exist in an uncreated person. But, because that human nature which the Son of God assumed, was at once made and assumed; therefore it was never a person. For, *in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman. The Word was made flesh,* Gal. iv. 4, John i. 14.

The Son of God did not assume a nature personated, as was said, having any being or existence in or by itself, as the subject thereof, but only a nature individuated, which never existed in itself, but exists in the divine person of the Son of God. Upon this assumption, which, with relation to the person assuming, is *active*, and, with relation to the nature assumed, *passive*; upon this, I say, follows the everlasting marriage-union between the nature of God and the nature of man, in the person of the eternal Son. This union is such, that the two natures, tho' still distinct, yet are so inseparable, that they cannot be lawfully sundered in the mind of any who contemplate this wonder, as if they were any different subsistences; for both the divine and human nature subsists in one and the same divine subject or person. It is true, the two natures of Christ may be separately considered in the understanding, philosophically by an intellectual idea or a mental speculation, which is not saving faith; for it is peculiar to saving faith, to see and behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, or to see the man Christ, as he is Immanuel God-man in one person. This faith differs as much from, and is as far above mere intellectual ideas, as intellectual ideas are above corporeal and imaginary ideas; yea much farther than reason is above sense; even as far as what is divine is above human, and supernatural is above merely natural.

Concerning this wonderful marriage-union between the divine and human nature in one person, it may be said, as above, that though it was the whole glorious Trinity that made the marriage, yet it was not the whole Trinity that was married to our nature. Of this union it can be said, that

the

the human nature is unite to the divine person, and the divine person is unite to the human nature: But the assumption, as it imports an action, cannot be spoke of the human nature; and, as it is passively considered, it cannot be spoke of the divine nature; for the divine person of the Son united himself to our nature. It is not in this as in human nature, soul and body makes up one nature and one person; but here the divine and the human nature are not one, but two natures and one person: for, in human nature, neither the body by itself, nor the soul by itself, have their compleat mode of existing; therefore the union of soul and body makes but one nature. But the divine nature of Christ hath by itself the most compleat mode of existing, without any possibility of a change thereof; and therefore, the human nature existing not properly in the *divine nature*, but in the *divine person* of Christ, the natures are distinct, and the person is one. As Christ assumed not a human person, but a human nature, so the human nature of Christ is not one nature with the divine, but one person; the human nature being assumed by Christ without a human personality: therefore, without any change of the divine nature †, the human nature subsists in the divine personality. Hence we can truly say, the man Christ is God, because we speak of the *person*, which includes the human nature; but none can say that Christ as man is God, because we then speak of the human *nature*, which includes not the divine person. Hence also, though this be a truth, That Christ is a man, yet it is not truth, that the human nature of Christ is a man: for a man is a person, but the human nature of Christ is no person.

That the human nature of Christ is not the man who is Christ, I prove thus. The Son of God is the man who is Christ. The man who is Christ did not assume himself, but the human nature: Therefore the human nature is not the man who is Christ.

Again,

† *Maccovii regulæ theol. & philos. p.* 124, 125. Personalitas divinæ Christi naturæ est *per se*, humanæ verò *per assumptionem*; quia divina & humana Christi natura non æquè faciunt ad constitutionem personæ, quia hoc repugnat æternitati & immutabilitati divinæ naturæ; nam quod ab æterno subsistit, ad ejus subsistentiæ constitutionem nihil potest facere id, quod in tempore demum factum est.

Per assumptionem naturæ humanæ in ὑποστασιν divinæ, nulla facta est mutatio in divina, sed tantum in humana natura. Omnis enim mutatio est vel generatio vel corruptio, vel augmentatio vel diminutio, vel alteratio vel motus localis: horum autem nihil in divinam naturam cadit.

Again, the Son of God did not assume the person of a man. But the man who is Christ, is a person: Therefore he did not assume that man who is Christ. That man who is Christ, was not assumed by the person of the Son of God; because that man who is Christ, is the person of the Son of God in two natures. The divine person is the subject wherein both natures, divine and human, do subsist. And here, lest any mistake the word as improper, to call the divine person the subject of the human nature, it is to be considered, that the word *subject* here does not import any thing like inferiority, but, on the contrary, a kind of superiority, as being that which supports and sustains any thing, so as it may be said to subsist in it. Hence there seems to be little difference between a person and a subject, except in the different consideration of it. Thus the human nature of Christ is not a subject, because it does not subsist in and by itself; whereas a subject signifies what exists in itself. Nor is the human nature of Christ a person, because every person is a subject existing in itself: Only the difference between a person and a subject (or *suppositum*) may be this, that they are not convertible terms; for though every person be a subject, yet every subject is not a person. Where there is but one person, there cannot be two subjects wherein that person exists. But Christ is one person: Therefore there cannot be two subjects, but one, which is the subject of both natures, the divine from eternity, and the human in time. Now, from what is said, it appears, that

The human nature of Christ cannot be the object of an imaginary idea, nay, nor of an intellectual one, so as we can think upon him as man, the same way, and with the same powers and faculties as we think of other men: And that because, (1.) The human nature of Christ is a nature unite to a higher than itself; and therefore a nature that hath not its subject of existence in itself, like the human nature in other men; but exists in the subject or person of that higher nature to which it is unite. (2.) Other men are persons; but Christ as man is no person: Therefore we cannot think of Christ as man, nor of his human nature, as we do of other men. (3.) The human nature of Christ is no subsistence; because in itself it does not exist, as God makes other men to do. Nothing is a subsistence which does not exist in and by itself, by divine appointment. (4.) The human nature of Christ is not, as schoolmen say, *res naturæ*, a natural thing; because a natural thing is a thing existing, having in itself a nature: but Christ's human nature hath

not

not a nature in itself; but other men have a nature in themselves, and so a personal subsistence; but Christ's humanity hath not that in itself. Nothing is a person that is personally united to a higher than itself. Dr. *Arrowsmith* on *John* i. *p.* 307. says, "If Christ had only assumed the person of a man, "then there must have been two persons in Christ, a person "assuming, and a person assumed; yea then that only person "which Christ assumed, should have been advanced and saved.——With us the soul and body, being united, make "a person. But, in Christ, the soul and body were so united, as to have their subsistence, not of themselves, (as in "us), but in the Godhead. No sooner was the soul united "to the body, but soul and body had subsistence in the second person of the Trinity; so, not the assuming of a "person, but the nature of a man, common to all the sons "and daughters of *Adam* and *Eve*. Therefore he took "not on him the nature of angels, *but the seed of Abraham*, "Heb. ii. 16. *Seed*, the first element of our nature, before "our persons come to have any subsistence."

Again, That Christ, as he is man, is not a person, may be cleared further, thus. If the human nature were a person, it behoved either to be an incarnate person, or a created person. It cannot be an *incarnate person*; because a temporal cannot be the reason of an eternal personality. It was the son of God that was incarnate. To say, the human nature was incarnate, is absurd. It cannot be a *created person*; because Christ is not more persons than one. And besides, whatever was fit or suitable to Christ as man, that was assumed; but Christ did not assume the person, but the nature: Therefore Christ, as man, is no person; because neither nature in general, nor human nature in particular, is the reason of personality in Christ, but the divine nature itself, with the property constituting a person. Hence, (1.) It cannot be said of Christ, as of other men, that, because he is a man, he is a person; for their single human nature, soul and body unite, constitutes their personal being. *Persona est per se una*; but it is not so with Christ. (2.) The dignity of human nature in another man, is, that, as a man, he is a person; but the dignity of Christ's human nature lies not at all in this, that it is a person; but the dignity thereof is incomparably and infinitely greater, when it subsists in the second person of the Godhead, by its mysterious hypostatical union with the eternal divine nature of the Son of God. Hence, (3.) Natural imagination cannot conceive a human nature that is

not

not a person, no more than it can conceive a predicate without a subject, a mountain without a valley, or a property, such as white or black, without conceiving something or other as the subject wherein these properties are to be seen: Consequently, even the human nature of Christ, which is not a person, cannot be the object of an imaginary idea, but only of faith upon a divine testimony. True, I have read among the arguments of such as would make Christ as man to be a person, this among the rest. *viz.* Actions or deeds (say they) are of subjects; that is, there cannot be an action or deed without a subject, who is the agent or doer of that deed: But Christ as man did many actions. Therefore Christ as man is a subject. But now the subject of a rational and intellectual nature is a person: Therefore Christ as man is a person. But the answer is, That, though actions are the actions of subjects; yet the subject acts by nature. Hence, though Christ as man did many things, it will not follow, that Christ as man is a subject (or *suppositum*), but that Christ is the subject of the human nature. The human nature was not the subject, or the person acting, but Christ. Thus Christ as man was born of a virgin; yet the person born was Christ, who is God-man. Christ as man was crucified; but the person crucified was Christ. As man he arose and ascended; but the person rising and ascending was Christ. Of which more afterwards.

Christ being made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, it might here be alledged further, that the human nature of Christ hath whatsoever human nature really hath in a created subject; but the human nature of every other man, is human nature existing in a created subject, that is, existing in itself: Therefore, if Christ became like unto us in all things, he behoved to be like unto us in this, which is the essential property of human nature, to exist in a created subject. If this were the case, then we might think of Christ as man, in the way we think of other men, namely, of a human nature, as a human nature existing in itself. But it is otherwise in Christ; his human nature is a human nature indeed existing; and in this he is like unto us in all things relative to a human nature, abstract from a person, or a subject wherein it exists: It exists, as divines express it, *in actu, sed non in actu in seipso*; it actually exists, but not actually in itself: For so it never existed. To conceive of other men is possible; because we conceive of their human nature in a human subject or person called man: But the human nature of Christ, as it is his human nature, is inconceivable,

conceivable; because the divine subject out of which it does not exist, is inconceivable. The manner of that existence is unfathomable by our finite understanding, and altogether supernatural. Therefore Mr. *Robe* can no more conceive of Christ as he does of other men, than he can conceive what is inconceivable, by both men and angels: For *great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh.* Or, if he conceives of him, as of other men, he conceives nothing but vanity. Why, to conceive of other men, is to conceive of human nature in itself, that is, existing in a subject called man. But human nature in itself is not the human nature of Christ, nor the object of faith. To speak of the human nature of Christ in itself, as if that could be any part of the object of faith, is to speak without knowledge; where there is no possibility of parting this object of it, that we now speak of, without the greatest absurdity: For, to conceive of a nature without a subject, or abstracting from the subject wherein it exists, is the same with conceiving a nature without an existence; which is a destroying the very existence of that nature. And thus the absurd notion of an imaginary idea of Christ as man, lands in making Christ's human nature neither the object of faith, nor sense, nor any thing at all, but a mere nothing. I had therefore more than reason to pray, as in my former letter, that all the Lord's people may be saved from such imaginary religion. In opposition to which, I assert, That the human nature of Christ, as it exists and subsists in the divine person of the Son of God, which is the only way wherein it doth subsist, though it can be in no sort the object of any imaginary idea; yet it is the greatest truth and reality, and the object only of spiritual knowledge and of saving faith. This I shall afterward further demonstrate from scripture and reason. Further,

Other men are so called, and so to be thought of, as having a created human nature in a created human subject. Here a mere creature is the object of the idea. But the human nature of Christ is to be thought of as a created human nature in an uncreated divine subject. This exceeds all created thoughts, and is only the object of faith, or of a believing thought. I can say truly, the man Christ, as the object of faith, is every where; because I speak of the person, the divine subject, wherein the human nature does subsist: But none can say, with truth, that Christ as man is every where; because they then exclude the divine nature, and the divine person of Christ; and so exclude the object of faith. It is equal-

ly impoſſible then to have an imaginary idea of Chriſt's manhood or humanity ſubſiſting in the Godhead of the Son, as it is impoſſible to have an imaginary idea of the Godhead, or Deity itſelf. Therefore the manhood and the humanity of Chriſt, as it is the object of an imaginary idea, is no part of the object of faith; becauſe, under that conſideration, it is no divine object, no divine ſubject, no divine nature, no divine perſon, an object not of divine faith, but of human fancy.

If Satan, and all his helliſh angels, had plotted a new ſcheme of divinity, for filling the thoughts of people with doctrine oppoſite to faith, and deſtructive of the Deity of our Redeemer, he could not, I think, have fallen upon a better method, than to publiſh to the world, under the notion of true and ſound divinity, the neceſſity of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man; becauſe as man he is not God. And, ſo long as the devil can get this imagination fixed, never, never, never will they believe that he is God, or God-man in one perſon. I am loth to ſuppoſe, that this hath been the ſtrain of Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine hitherto; but I fear the defence of a deluſive and imaginary work, (as to the body of the ſubjects of it) under the notion of its being divine, hath led him into a ſnare of deluſive and imaginary doctrine; which, even in the very way wherein he expreſſes it, is wholly irreconcileable with orthodoxy. And in this I make an appeal to all the unbiaſſed ſound divines in the Chriſtian world; not excepting *Popiſh* authors themſelves; who are generally ſound in the doctrine of the Trinity. Yea, I could appeal to all Chriſtian churches upon earth, if Mr. *Robe*'s accuſing me of blaſphemy in denying the human nature of Chriſt to be the object of faith, be not a charge without any foundation, except that of groſs ignorance? and if this doctrine of imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man, be conſiſtent either with philoſophy or divinity?

CHAP. III.

Relating to the ignorance, error, unbelief, atheiſm and idolatry imported in the doctrine anent the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man.

AN imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, which Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks of ſo much, is neither good ſenſe in philoſophy nor divinity. In philoſophy, it is groſs nonſenſe; and, in divinity, it is groſs ignorance. (1.) In philoſophy, it is groſs nonſenſe. If by man is underſtood both body and ſoul unite in one perſon, or a rational creature of the human kind, the ima-

imaginary idea can only be about the body; but it requires an intellectual idea to think of a rational soul. So that, to speak of a reasonable creature, and make it conceivable by a faculty which only reaches to mere corporeal things, is an intolerable imposition upon the common sense of mankind. (2.) In divinity, it is gross ignorance, to speak of an imaginary idea of Christ as man: For, since this idea only respects corporeity, to conceive of Christ as man by such an idea, is to conceive, I may suppose, either of a human person, or of a human nature without a human personality. To conceive of Christ as a human person, is abominable; for his human nature is not a person, far less his human body, which can only be the object of an imaginary idea. Again, to conceive of a human nature without a human person, is impossible; for none can form the idea of a nature without a subject in which that nature exists, suitable to its nature: So that a human nature without a human person, or subject in which it exists, cannot be imagined. But the human nature of Christ hath no human person, nor human subject in which it exists; but only the person of the eternal Son of God, who is infinitely above all imaginary or corporeal ideas. Therefore, the human nature of Christ cannot be the object of an imaginary idea, without the greatest absurdity, and the greatest contradiction, both to common sense, and the doctrine of faith.

We can no more conceive of Christ's human nature without conceiving of a human person, than we can conceive of a predicate without a subject. It is as possible in nature to think, as I said above, of a mountain without a valley, as to think of a human nature without a human subject, in which it exists: And yet the human nature of Christ never existed in itself, or in a human subject, but in the person of the Son of God. Therefore to speak of conceiving of the human nature of Christ by an imaginary idea, or any other way, than by the faith of God's operation, leaning upon the testimony of God, is to grasp at a mere shadow, and to bring down the highest mysteries of our holy religion, to be obvious to every notional fool in the world, that can form the image of a man in his head. O! how is image-worship and idolatry thus subtilely preached up, and a vain imaginary religion brought in, instead of gospel-doctrine, and spiritual truth, the truth as it is in Jesus. May the Lord pity a generation given up to gross delusions and ignorant dreams.

Since Mr. *Robe* owns that nothing but what is corporeal can be the object of an imaginary idea, it is strange that he

ſhould make any nature whatſoever the object of it; nature in the abſtract being not only an incorporeal thing, but a nothing; I know not if the ſchools would call it *ens rationis*: But much more that he ſhould make a rational nature the object of ſuch an irrational idea. If ever an intellectual idea was neceſſary for conceiving of human nature, it ſeems neceſſary for conceiving of that nature, as it ſubſiſts in the perſon of the Son of God. Yet Mr. *Robe* makes that nature in him to be only the object of an imaginary idea, as if it were only a corporeal, not a rational nature. But, as the learned *Charnock* ſays, *Vol.* II. *p.* 506. "The divine and human natures are united in one perſon; the higheſt intellectual nature, with the loweſt rational nature. —— Chriſt calls himſelf *the Son of man*, to ſhew that he was really man in qualities, *John* iii. 13. yet ſaith he, *which is in heaven*, to manifeſt that he is God; —— God in heaven manifeſted in fleſh upon the earth; each preſerving their entire properties.—— The two natures are diſtinct, yet united in one ſubſiſtence, and make but one perſon, as ſoul and body make one man."

An imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, is an expreſſion of Mr. *Robe*'s, which I defy any rational man to conſider, and yet free it from being the groſſeſt abſurdity. Why, a corporeal idea of Chriſt as man, is an idea of a body and ſoul unite in one human nature. Let all the philoſophers on earth try their skill, if they can conceive of ſuch an union, by a mere ſenſitive, corporeal or imaginative idea. Nay, according to the nature of things, it is a mere impoſſibility; for a corporeal idea can conceive of no other union, but of corporeal things, ſuch as two bodies knit together. But, to conceive of a body and a ſpirit unite in one human nature, requires at leaſt the concurrence of an intellectual idea, and the exerciſe, not of mere ſenſation, but of reflexion, or of common judgment and underſtanding. Such is the cloſe connexion between ſenſe and reaſon in man, or between imagination and underſtanding, that, when by a ſenſitive or imaginative idea we ſee or view the body of a man, we at the ſame moment of time, by an intellectual idea, ſee or know that he is a man; becauſe body and ſoul make but one compoſition, one human nature, one man, one perſon. Now, it is not ſenſe alone without reaſon, that can think of this compoſition: For, from the view that *ſenſe* has of the body, reaſon inſtantly, which only can deduce inferences, concludes it is a man it ſees. So that, to make the knowing of one to be a man, to be only the object of ſenſe, or of an imaginary idea, and not

alſo

also of the intellect or understanding, is very absurd; much more to make Christ's human nature the object thereof, as Mr. *Robe* so frequently doth. But, if we conceive of that, as we do of other men, and, from the view or notion of his body, infer that he is a man, as other men are, that is, a human person, as we must conceive all other men to be, when soul and body are unite; then we conceive a falshood: Because, tho' his soul and body unite make a human nature; yet they make not a human person; and therefore that human nature cannot be conceived the same way, as we conceive of other men. But, when by faith, (and not at all by fancy,) we conceive of the human nature of Christ, we conceive also of his divine personality, and see God in him; for *faith's view* of his human nature implies it; because, as soul and body in other men make one person, so the human nature and the divine nature of Christ make but one person. So that, as when we see a human body living, sense and reason sees it is a human person; even so, when we see the human nature of Christ *believingly*, faith sees his divine person; because his divine and human nature is one person. Hence to speak of an *imaginary* or corporeal *idea of Christ as man, or in his human nature*, so oft uttered by Mr. *Robe*, is the most ignorant phrase that can be uttered. As long as man signifies a soul and body unite, constituting a human nature and person, a corporeal idea of it is but a thinking on a body without a soul; and to call that a man, and make this image in the mind, a part of the object of faith, be astonished, O heavens! at this distracted divinity.

If Mr. *Robe* had spoke of the imaginary idea of Christ as a *human body*, instead of saying, as man, it would have been more *tolerable philosophy*; because the corporeal idea and the corporeal object would agree. But still it would have been *intolerable divinity*; because, to convey to any man's mind the abstract idea of Christ's human body, would be to obscure the glorious object of faith with the thick fumes and dark smoke of sense. It is true, in the human nature of Christ, though the soul and body are distinct, so far as to require an intellectual, as well as a corporeal idea, to conceive of them jointly; yet they are not distinct natures, but one and the same human nature, consisting of soul and body. But I say, the human nature of Christ may be conceived abstractly from the divine by the understanding; because these are two distinct natures in one person. Yet this metaphysical distinction, however necessary in the divinity of the schools, for refuting the subtile errors of hereticks on this point, and so belongs not to any vain,

vain, but neceſſary and uſeful philoſophy; yet this ſeparate conſideration of Chriſt's natures human and divine, and abſtract notion of the one from the other, however it belongs to philoſophical ſpeculation; yet it is not the object of ſaving faith; which terminates only upon the perſon of Chriſt Immanuel God-man. The divine nature is not the object of ſaving faith ſeparate from the human, nor the human ſeparate from the divine; but the glorious perſon himſelf, in whom alone God is to be ſeen by faith as a reconciled God, 2 *Cor.* v. 19. and in whom, as God-man, God and man can meet together.

As the ſcripture is no ſyſtem of philoſophical notions, ſo there is no ſuch word therein as that of *Chriſt as man*, in Mr. *Robe*'s ſtile. And no wonder; for the ſcripture leads us to God only as the object of faith and worſhip: But Chriſt as man is not God, nor a perſon, but a nature. Chriſt is the name of a perſon, clothed with, and anointed to ſaving offices, but not Chriſt as man.

The ſcripture, though it never ſpeaks of Chriſt *as man*, yet frequently he is therein called by the name of a man, thus: *A man of ſorrows*; *after me cometh a man*; *the man of God's right hand*; *the man Jeſus Chriſt*. But then, by an uſual figure of a part for the whole, the perſon is underſtood. But, becauſe as man, he is no perſon, nor as man is he God; therefore, when we ſpeak of Chriſt as man, his perſonality is excluded from the conſideration, and only his manhood conſidered. Whereas, to ſpeak of Chriſt as a man, in the ſcripture-ſenſe, is only to denominate the perſon by the nature he aſſumed. Thus Chriſt is frequently in ſcripture called the *Son of man*, that is, the perſon who is the Son of God, denominated by his human nature; as I have ſhewed above.

It is impoſſible (as I ſaid) to form an imaginary idea of a created nature in an uncreated ſubject; for that is the human nature of Chriſt. Let Mr. *Robe* try his hand, if he can get a limner to paint the likeneſs of a man, without painting the likeneſs of a perſon, or the figure of a human nature, without painting a human ſubject, in which it is ſuppoſed to exiſt. Even as little can he paint the figure of Chriſt as man in his mind, or form in his brain the idea of his human nature, without the idea of a human perſon: So that the idea he here contends for, muſt of neceſſity make him, whether he will or not, to be a rank *Neſtorian*; that is, of a principle, maintaining Chriſt to be a human perſon, as well as a divine one, and as having two perſons, as well as two natures; a principle condemned by all the Chriſtian churches ever ſince the day of *Neſtorius*. It is true, Mr. *Robe* aſſerts, that Chriſt hath

two

two distinct natures, and one person. But, if he maintains this as his principle, then he must renounce this principle anent the imaginary idea of Christ as man, as a principle hurtful, instead of being helpful to faith, otherwise he maintains direct contradictions; since there is no conceiving of Christ as man, or as to his human nature subsisting only in the person of the Son of God, but only by faith of the operation of God; which will be a mystery imperceptible by human fancy, whether Mr. *Robe* will or not. This wisdom of God in a mystery is above reason itself; and much more above all the imaginary ideas of men.

To see Christ as man by an imaginary idea, is a sight that will do no man any good; for God is not to be seen in Christ as man. God is indeed to be seen in the man Christ, that is, the person Christ; but he cannot be seen in Christ as man; because, as man, he is not God. Yea, as man, in Mr. *Robe*'s sense, God is not in him; for God dwells only in the person Christ, who is God-man; but Christ, as man, is not the person in whom God dwells. Never one beheld God in Christ as man. But glory to God, that thousands have seen God in the man Jesus Christ, who is *Immanuel*, *God with us*.

O the sinfulness of an imaginary idea of Christ as man! It is directly opposite to faith, and contradictory to it. The language of faith is, I see as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and am changed into the same image: I see the man Christ in the glass of the word of grace, the glorious gospel; and there I see the truth of his manhood and Godhead both in one person; and am charmed, enamoured, changed and transformed with the sight into his image, the image of God. But the language of the imaginary idea of Christ as man, is, I see Christ as man in the image that I frame of his human body in the glass of my own brain; and I am changed into the same image; that is, to the image of an idol, or to an idolater, of whose images it is said, *Their maker is like unto them.* They are changed into the image of a man, or rather the image of an image; that is, to enthusiasts and imaginationists.

To have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is a consideration of part of Christ's humanity, separately from his person, a consideration of that part of his human nature which is called the human body; and is a viewing of that, and not of *him*; for, as man, he is not a *him*, or a *person*: And therefore, when we think of him as to that part of his human nature, we do not think of *him*, but of *it*. For example, if I consider a blackmore to be white, as to the white of his eye, then I am considering *it*, not *him*: So it is here; when we think

think of Christ as to his human body, we are not thinking of *him*, but of *it*; for his human body is not himself, that is, it is not his *person*, it is not *he*. Nay, the thinking on *it*, leads us off from thinking of *him*, as long as our imagination or fancy leads us to think of *it*, so long we are led off from thinking on *him*. Every imaginary idea, therefore, of Christ as man, instead of being necessary to faith, is sinful and hurtful, and directly opposite to faith; which leads to think upon the person of Christ the God-man, and so to think upon Christ himself. Whereas the foresaid idea of him as man necessarily carries away our thoughts from him to a vain unprofitable notion.

Mr. *Robe* grants what is true, that nothing but what is merely corporeal can be the object of an imaginary idea. But, though a person may be denominated by his body *figuratively*, yet no mere corporeal thing or body can be a person *really*: Therefore no real person, even human, can be the object of a mere imaginary idea.

As there is adultery in the heart, and theft in the heart, so there is idolatry in the heart, and false worship: As, when we worship not the person of Christ, but the image of his humanity, which the imaginary idea of it makes upon the imagination, or that we form to ourselves in our head. And this is a sin, I suppose, more rife and frequent among God's people than we are aware of; and has little need to be encouraged by the doctrine of imaginary ideas relating to Christ's humanity, the most subtile image-worship that can be thought of.

Mr. *Robe*, by his doctrine, denies that one can have the faith of Christ's being man, or the faith of his human nature, unless he have an imaginary idea of his human body. But how widely do these two differ? They that look to Christ by faith, cannot but believe his humanity; because they see his person God-man. But they that look to him by fancy or an imaginary idea, cannot see his person, because they look only to his human body. Faith apprehends the person, and so takes in a whole Christ, his personality. Fancy apprehends nothing but the corporeity in itself; which yet in itself is no more the object of faith, than any other human or natural body: Which, to make it a proper object of faith, is horrible idolatry. God only is the proper object of faith and worship. The human nature of Christ is not God. Therefore, the human nature of Christ in itself, is not the proper object of faith and worship. How then can it be so, as it is the object of an imaginary idea which looks to nothing but what is corporeal. That God only is the object of faith

and

and worship, cannot be denied; for it is said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* That the human nature of Christ is God, cannot be asserted without absurd nonsense and blasphemy. Therefore the above conclusion must hold, That the human nature of Christ in itself is not the object of faith; and how can his human body be so? How can that idea that takes up Christ's human body by itself, be helpful to that faith that views it, not by itself, but subsisting in the divine person of the Son of God? Indeed the natural idea cannot conceive otherwise, than Mr. *Robe* supposes. Therefore I say of a natural idea, as the Apostle says of the *natural man*, It *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: Neither can* it do so; *for they are spiritually discerned.* The corporeal substance of Christ's human body is only the object of *sense*. Faith believes the truth of his corporeity, or that he hath a true body, as well as a reasonable soul; but faith cannot make that natural body of his, absent or present, its object of trust, or believe in it. This is idolatry.

Our Lord charges them with mental adultery, *that look on a woman to lust after her*, Matth. v. 28. This sin may be as really committed, though a woman be not present to be looked at with the bodily eye. If a man shall frame an imaginary idea of a woman in his mind, to lust after her, it is mental adultery. Even so it is mental idolatry, to form a picture of Christ's human nature in our mind, by an imaginary idea of it; and so to make that the object of faith or worship. To form that picture of his humanity in the mind, is a mental looking to it: And to make that the object of faith and worship, is a falling down to that image; and committing mental idolatry with it. Indeed I know not who can justify themselves, and say, they are free of this sin in some measure. It is too natural to every man, and, I believe, to every saint, as long as he is in the flesh, and hath a body of sin and death carrying about with him. But I think it is possible for true believers, to take up a vast difference between that fancy or imagination of Christ as man, which can lead a person no farther, and that faith that apprehends him as God-man, and sees the glory of God in his person. The former is nothing but a shadow, and a mishapen apprehension, a notion of something in the head; and yet put in the room of Christ. But, here to anticipate what will further occur: "Can you think of God-man, says Mr. *Robe*, without "thinking on him as man? Is it not necessary in the nature "of the thing, that you have an imaginary idea or conce-

" ption of his being man; otherwiſe you cannot conceive of " his being God-man?" *Anſwer.* I think, neither the Godhead nor the manhood of Chriſt can be rightly conceived, but by faith. It is ſtrange to alledge, as if by one means we conceive believingly of his manhood, and by another of his Godhead; as if the one were by an imaginary idea, and the other by faith and ſpiritual illumination; or as if the imaginary idea, which is a natural act, was helpful to ſpiritual actings of the ſoul; when it is rather the quite reverſe. The ſpiritual believing view of Chriſt as God-man, through the illumination of the Spirit, is the only means for enabling the natural faculties to any right thought or conception of Chriſt, and without which even his humanity is quite imperceptible, as it is the object of faith. This is one of the *things of Chriſt*, which fleſh and blood cannot, but our heavenly Father can reveal, and which the Spirit of Chriſt only can ſhew unto us, *John* xvi. 14. The natural man receiveth them not.

The ſight of what is corporeal, as the object of the imaginary idea is, can never in itſelf fit or prepare one for ſeeing what is ſpiritual; but rather darkens the underſtanding, and makes it unfit; even as the god of this world does thereby blind the minds of them that believe not. The image of Chriſt's natural body in the fancy darkens the view of Chriſt, as the image of God, by faith. Theſe two images cannot ſtand together, no more than dagon and the ark. Dagon muſt fall, if the ark come into the heart.

Pectora noſtra duas non admittentia curas.

Again, let a man have an imaginary idea of Chriſt's human nature, now exalted to heaven, and ſitting at the right hand of God, and on the throne of God; he forms the idea, of a man, and the idea of a throne on which he ſits. I would ask, whether the idea he hath of a *man*, be any better than the idea he hath of a *throne*; or if any of theſe ideas gives the leaſt help or aſſiſtance to his faith; or rather, if they do not cloud his mind, and contribute to make him have a groſs, carnal and unworthy notion of Chriſt? Can he, in that glaſs ſee any thing of the inviſible glory of God in Chriſt, as the image of the inviſible God?

Peter Martyr, loc. com. p. 155. ſpeaking of images of Chriſt, ſays, " If the bodily preſence of Chriſt was a hinde- " rance to the apoſtles, and the ſight of his human nature " an impediment, unfitting them for receiving the Spirit, " till once he went away in that reſpect from them, *John* " xvi. 7. how much more will images of Chriſt prove impe- " diments?"

We

We have no other glass to see Christ in, but the gospel; no other eye to see him savingly by, but faith. If the eye of sense and imagination shall come between, there is no seeing of Christ by faith, till that eye of sense be shut.

Again, to conceive of Christ as man, is carnal worship and idolatry, when this imaginary idea of him as man is brought in, as helpful and necessary to faith or worship. Which two I mention together, because faith is a special leading part of divine worship. Dr. *Ridgley*, speaking against images and idolatry, (*Body of divinity, vol.* II. *p.* 257.) hath these words: *That whatever of Christ comes within the reach of the art of man, is only his human nature; which is not the object of divine adoration: And therefore this rather tends to debase, than give us raised and becoming conceptions of him as such.* Even so say I, Whatever of Christ comes within the reach of any man's imaginary idea, is only his human body; or at most, I shall suppose, his human nature; which yet is not the object of divine adoration or faith: And therefore, this rather tends to debase, than give us raised and becoming conceptions of him; and thus, instead of being helpful, it is hurtful to our faith and worship. In the above words of Dr. *Ridgley*, Mr. *Robe* may find this truth asserted indeed *in terminis, That the human nature of Christ*, as there spoke of, *is not the object of divine worship*: And yet, if he should pretend to find a charge of blasphemy against the Doctor, he would but mire himself more and more.

In a word, how idolatrous this ideal and imaginary doctrine is, might be further evidenced from the opposite doctrine of the ancient fathers. *Clemens Alexandrinus, strom.* 6. says, *Essentiam divinam colere in materia, est eam per sensum dedecorare*: That is, *To worship the divine essence in any thing material or corporeal, is to disgrace and deface it by sense.* Even so I may say, To worship the person of our Immanuel God-man, in an imaginary idea of him as man, which can apprehend no more but what is corporeal, is to disgrace and deface that person by sense and fancy. *Augustine* also, *epist.* 119. speaking of the divine essence, says, *Nulla imago ejus coli debet, nisi illa quæ hoc est quod ipse*: That is, *No image of God ought to be worshipped, but that which is what he is.* Thus indeed Christ could not be lawfully worshipped, if he were not essentially what the Father is. But his human nature is not that which he is; and therefore his human nature cannot be lawfully worshipped, but in his divine person; which is what he is. And hence, that which is the object of

an imaginary idea, must be excluded from the object of faith and worship, otherwise we believe in and worship an image of our own brain; which, instead of being divine worship, is gross idolatry.

Again, this ideal doctrine is atheistical: For thus I may argue, To conceive of God as man, is *Atheism.* But to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is a conceiving of God as man; and therefore the imaginary idea of Christ as man is Atheism. The *first* is evident; because to conceive of God as man, is to make him not God, but man in our minds. The *second* proposition is what I prove thus: To have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is a conceiving of God as man; because it is a conceiving of the man Christ, who is God, not as the person God-man, but as man: Which is a way of conceiving of him, that excludes both his Godhead and personality. But does not Mr. *Robe* again and again assert, That, together with the imaginary idea of Christ as man, we must have an idea of him as God, and then as God-man in one person? Yea, he doth: But therein he says palpable contradictions. For the first of these assertions destroys the two following; which are not in common sense reconcileable with it, as long as common sense and Christian doctrine can assert for a truth, That the man Christ is God, and God-man in one person; but that Christ as man is not God, nor a divine person. Therefore the conclusion is plain, That an imaginary idea of Christ as man is in itself Atheism; because it is a conceiving of him, not by faith, but by fancy: Hence not as God-man in the light of the word, but as man in the light of natural imagination.

That an imaginary idea of Christ as man, does in itself lead to gross Atheism, and is direct Atheism, I prove further by the following argument: *That which tends to divide, destroy, and annihilate the person of Christ as God man in one person, leads to, and implies direct Atheism. But an imaginary idea of Christ as man, tends to divide, destroy, and annihilate the person of Christ as God-man in one person:* Therefore, *that imaginary idea of Christ as man, leads to, and implies direct Atheism.* The major, or first proposition in this argument, cannot well be denied; unless it be denied, that Christ as God-man is truly God, and the same one God essentially with the Father, and Holy Ghost, though personally distinct from them; and unless it be denied, that it is not Atheism, to attempt the dividing, destroying, and annihilating of God; which I suppose none will deny. Therefore it remains only, that I prove the second, or minor proposition, namely, *That an imaginary idea of Christ as man tends to divide, destroy,*

stroy, and annihilate the person of Christ as God-man in one person. This I shall prove in the three several heads of, dividing, destroying, and annihilating.

(1.) An imaginary idea of Christ as man necessarily *divides* the person of Christ; because it divides the soul from the body of Christ, and also the human nature from the divine. That it divides the soul from the body of Christ, is plain from Mr. *Robe*'s own frequent concession, That imaginary ideas can have only corporeal objects, but it cannot think of souls, or spiritual things. This requires ideas of another kind; without which we cannot think in a rational way of any man as he is a rational creature, nor have an idea of a whole human nature. But, suppose an imaginary idea could reach the human nature of man, yea, though it had an intellectual idea to assist it; yet it would divide the human nature from the divine, or the manhood from the Godhead. Because Christ as man is not God; therefore, to conceive of Christ as man, cannot be to conceive of him as God. Indeed any other consideration of Christ is reconcileable with conceiving of him as God, and with the conceiving of his person. To conceive of him as the man Christ Jesus, or to conceive of him as the Prophet, Priest and King of *Zion*, or by whatever other name or office, imports and includes a conceiving of the person God-man, thus named, and of such a function. But, to conceive of him as man is, to exclude the person, and exclude the thoughts of his being God; for as man he is not God, nor a person either. Thus the imaginary idea of Christ as man divides both his humanity and personality; that is, his body from his soul, and his nature from his person; and so leaves nothing of the true object of saving faith to the fore; nothing but the picture of a human body, an object of mere sense. Further, as it divides the humanity, and divides the personality, so, of consequence, it divides the unity of the person: in so far as the conceiving of him as man, does not include the conceiving of him as God. The conceiving of him as man, cannot include, but must exclude the conceiving of him as God-man in one person. Therefore,

(2.) As it *divides*, so it *destroys* the consideration of Christ as God-man in one person: For here to divide, is to destroy. It destroys the object of faith altogether: For the human nature of Christ cannot be the object of faith, *when the true body* is divided from the reasonable soul; for it is not the human body, but the human nature of Christ as joined in one person with the divine, that is the object of faith. And, *when the personality* is divided, that is, the human nature from the divine,

divine, and, consequently, the unity of these *two* natures in one person, the object of faith is destroyed. We may conceive by faith of the human nature of Christ as personally unite to the person of the Son of God. But, to conceive of his human nature as such, is to conceive of it by itself. This may be thought *metaphysically* possible; but it is *morally*, and, I may say, almost *physically* impossible; because the human nature of Christ is not, nor ever was a human nature by itself: For it never had, nor hath any being by itself, otherwise it would be a human person; which is absurd, as I have shewed. Now, that which hath no natural being by itself, and hath no being but in the Son of God, cannot be conceived by itself, without destroying the very being of it by that conception. So that, to conceive of Christ as man, or of his human nature as such, abstractly, which is to conceive of his human nature by itself, so as not to include the conception of his divine nature and person, in which alone that nature exists, is to destroy the person of Christ as God-man in one person; and so to destroy the object of faith. And, of consequence,

(3.) This imaginary idea of Christ as man, tends to *annihilate* the person of Christ as God-man in one person; and does actually annihilate, or turn it to nothing, as far as that idea can. For, as there can be no faith or conception of Christ's human nature where there is only the idea of a *human body*, nor any faith of his divine person where there is only an imaginary idea of him as man, or of his *human nature*, as such, or by itself; so the imaginary conceit, dividing and destroying the humanity and personality, destroys and annihilates the unity of the divine and human nature in one person; and, consequently, annihilates the very being of the person of Christ: For, to destroy the unity thereof, is to destroy the being thereof, according to the known maxim, † *Esse & unum convertuntur*: that is to say, *Entity and unity are convertible terms*; or, which is the same, *To be and to be one, is the same thing.* That which is not one thing, can be nothing. *E. G.* (1.) The human nature of Christ is one, and cannot be divided into more natures, though it consist of soul and body; yet neither is the body, as such, the human nature, nor the soul, as such, the human nature. To form an imaginary idea of Christ's human body, and call it an idea of his human nature, or of Christ as

† *De Vries* determ. ontol. *p.* 16. *Esse & unum reciprocantur. Esse autem quodvis ens, qua tale, unum nullo negotio demonstratur. Puta, si ens non sit unum, erit utique plura: atqui sic divisum erit; consequenter non jam amplius ens, sed entia.*

as man, which Mr. *Robe* so frequently does, is to divide the nature, and make it not one; which is to annihilate it. (2.) The divine nature of Christ is one with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost. To conceive of any, or all the three persons of the glorious Trinity, is not to conceive of three natures; for this were to divide the Deity, which is one; and cannot be divided, without the annihilation of it, or making it no Deity, no God. (3.) Christ's divine person is one. To conceive of two natures of Christ, is not to conceive of two persons, but of one divine person, subsisting in and of himself. But, to conceive of Christ as man, which is the conceiving of him not as God, or to conceive of his human nature as such, abstractly, which is to conceive of it by itself, though yet it have no being or existence in and of itself; this is the same with conceiving of it as a person, which is to destroy the unity, and so to annihilate the being of the person of Christ. Thus an imaginary idea of Christ as man, does, in effect, turn that which is being itself, into no being, and him that is all, into nothing. It is big-bellied with a monster of Atheism.

An imaginary idea, according to Mr. *Robe*'s own concession, can have nothing but what is corporeal for its object; and therefore nothing that is spiritual or divine. An imaginary idea then of Christ as man, can have no respect either to the divine nature of Christ, or the divine person of Christ, or the divine mystery of the union between the divine and the human nature; for none of these are corporeal objects. Why then, the imaginary idea must, according to Mr. *Robe*, be conversant only about Christ's corporeal humanity, if I may speak so; which yet it cannot be, without making that humanity like the imaginary idea itself, an imaginary nothing. This I prove further by an induction of particulars.

An imaginary idea of Christ as man, or of Christ's humanity, must have for its object, one or all of these four; either a human soul, or a human body, or a human person in the concrete, or a human nature in the abstract. But none of these can be the object of an imaginary idea, without turning Christ's humanity to nothing.

(1.) The object of it cannot be the human soul of Christ: For, as his human soul is not his whole human nature, so the soul, being a spirit, cannot be the object of an imaginary idea; which, as Mr. *Robe* owns, hath no spiritual things for its object, but only corporeal.

(2.) The object of it must be, and yet cannot be the human body of Christ by itself, without destroying the very notion of the human nature; for human nature consists in the vital union

of

of soul and body. Neither soul nor body makes up human nature, unless they be unite. And even this union of soul and body, or any relation whatsoever, can by no means fall within the compass of any mere imaginary idea; but are objects of understanding.

(3.) The object of it cannot be a human person, without destroying both the humanity and the personality of Christ: For the humanity of Christ does not subsist but in his divine person; and his human nature cannot be imagined to be a human person, without supposing, (as I said), he hath two persons, a human and a divine, as well as two natures. Which all sound Christians in the world own to be a gross error. Therefore,

(4.) The object of it must be, and yet cannot be human nature in the abstract: For, to think of human nature without a subject, or person in which it exists, is inconsistent with the nature of things; for human nature hath no real being in the abstract: And so to think of it thus, is to think of that which is not. And therefore the imaginary idea of Christ as man, can come to no other issue, but an imaginary nothing.

But, to give Mr. *Robe* all the justice I can, it will be said, I consider the imaginary idea of Christ as man by itself separately; whereas Mr. *Robe* considers it jointly with the idea of Christ as God, and as God-man in one person. I confess, I do consider the object of the imaginary idea separately from the object of faith. And I must do so, because faith and fancy are distinct things; yea, opposites, that will not incorporate or mix together, without destroying one another. Hence, when Mr. *Robe* asserts, That this imaginary idea of Christ as man is necessary to the believing that he is God-man in one person, it appears, by the above argument, that the amount of this assertion is, That we cannot believe in Christ as God and man in one person, without imagining that he is nothing at all; because the imaginary idea of him as man, or of his humanity, must conceive of him, either as a human soul or a human body, or a human person, or a human nature in the abstract: Which yet, as I have proven, cannot be the object of any imaginary idea, without turning that object, the humanity of Christ, into the image of that act, whereof it is the object; that is, to nothing at all, but an imaginary act upon an imaginary object; which is an imaginary shadow, an imaginary nothing. Now, to make this essential to faith, so as none can believe in Christ as God-man without it, I want words to tell what horrible divinity it is; and how much it

seems

seems to be a discredit to reason itself, as well as religion, a dishonour to Christ, and disgrace to Christianity.

CHAP. IV.

I Come *next*, as I proposed, to shew the absurdity of that principle, *That an imaginary idea of Christ as man is helpful to the faith of his being God-man*; and also to shew, that no imaginary idea of any corporeal object can give any help, either to the divine or human faith of any truth or proposition relating to that object. This one would think is obvious enough to any that will but endeavour to exercise the reason that God hath given them. Mr. *Robe* asserts, That it is necessary to a right conception of Christ as God-man, to have an imaginary idea of him as man. His argument, I think, may be reduced to this form: *If we cannot believe that Christ is God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man; then an imaginary idea of him as man is necessary to the believing that he is God-man.* But so *it is, that we cannot believe that he is God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man*: *Therefore*, &c. I answer, (1.) By denying the sequel of the major, or first proposition: For, though it should be granted, that we cannot believe in him as God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man; yet it will not follow, that therefore that imaginary idea is necessary to the believing that he is God-man; because that imaginary idea is not necessary to faith, or to the act of believing, but only necessarily in the man that doth believe, in so far as he is *a man* that hath flesh, as well as spirit, not as he is *a believer*, but a man endued with an imaginative faculty; by which he has the notion of a *man*, a human body: Which imaginative faculty is not at all the faculty or power by which he believes; for he believes by a spiritually enlightened understanding, carrying the will along with it, towards Christ. But, though the said imaginative faculty attends some way necessarily with the person believing, who is the subject in which that faculty naturally resides; yet that imaginative faculty, and its exercise representing the image of a man, is no more concerned in the act itself of believing, than it is able to apprehend the object of faith, namely, the glorious person of the God-man. Hence, (2.) There is a manifest fallacy in the argument, namely, what is called by logicians, *fallacia à dicto secundum quid*. It is true as spoken of the imaginative faculty, that relates to what is corporeal, or to the object of sense; but not as spoken of the believing faculty,

that relates to a ſpiritual conſideration of Chriſt's humanity, and as it is the object of faith. The ſenſitive faculty acts towards what is ſenſible, or the corporeal faculty by an idea of what is corporeal; for the natural faculties and powers act in their natural way. But theſe are diſtinct things, in all reſpects, from the ſupernatural faculty and power of believing, which is exerciſed about the ſupernatural object of faith. Mr. *Robe*'s argument then confounds theſe things that are in themſelves every way diſtinct, namely, faith and fancy; yea, faith and carnal ſenſe. For, to ſpeak of a ſpiritual imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, would be contradictory to common ſenſe, and Mr. *Robe*'s own deſcriptions of the objects of imaginary ideas, their being only corporeal things: Which being carnal things, and not ſpiritual, his argument neceſſarily confounds divine faith with carnal ſenſe and carnal imagination.

To make any thing that is ſimply corporeal the object of faith, is to deſtroy the very nature of faith: For, as the learned *Ravenal* ſays, *Theſaurus ſcripturæ, vol.* 1. *p.* 995. *Quòd ea ſit fidei natura, ut etiam res* inviſibiles, *&, judicio humano, impoſſibiles,* apprehendat, *Rom.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xi. 1. *Adde quoque,* 2 *Cor.* iv. 18. *unde dicitur, Quòd per fidem ambulemus, non per aſpectum; quia fides facit, ut apprehendamus res inviſibiles, quarum aſpectu nondum potimur. That it is the nature of faith, to apprehend things inviſible, and, to human judgment, impoſſible, Rom.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xi. 1. 2 *Cor.* iv. 18. *Hence it is ſaid,* We walk by faith, not by ſight; *becauſe faith makes us apprehend things inviſible, whereof we do not as yet enjoy the ſight.*

That which is ſimply corporeal, is the object of ſenſe, and not of faith. The imaginary idea, having for its object only what is ſimply and merely corporeal, comprehends no part of the object of faith. Add, that to be ſimply corporeal, is to be ſo in itſelf: But that part of the human nature of Chriſt which is corporeal, was never merely or ſimply ſo in itſelf, any more than the whole human nature of Chriſt, which was never human nature in itſelf. And therefore that corporeal thing which the imaginary idea apprehends, being ſimply corporeal in itſelf, was never any part of the human nature of Chriſt; and therefore never any part of the object of faith, which conceives of Chriſt's human nature as having no exiſtence in itſelf, nor as ſubſiſting any other way, but in the perſon of the Son of God. Which myſterious humanity tranſcends the intellectual ideas of all the rational world, much more the ſenſitive imaginary idea of mankind; and can only be conceived by ſpiritual ſupernatural light and ſaving faith, grounded upon goſpel-revelation. An imaginary idea, therefore, applied to this

this subject, is a mere chimerical principle, of which nothing can be understood but the name; or a sound of words, which the authors thereof may use, as an altar of refuge for their own ignorance. Whatever their design be, they may say of their image of Christ formed in the brain by an imaginary idea, as *Aaron* said of his idol, *I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf.* They bring forth an image of Christ in the brain, that diverts the mind from the true Christ, and from the true spiritual object of faith set before us in the gospel; where alone, *beholding as in a glass his glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

A true believer hath a threefold life, animal, rational, and supernatural. Imaginary ideas belong to the first, intellectual ideas to the second, and faith of God's operation to the third. How ridiculous is it to bring in with the last of these what belongs to the first? One would think it very childish and ridiculous, to say, none can believe that Christ is God-man, having a true body and a reasonable soul, without any *intellectual idea* of a human *soul*; much more, to say, none can believe it, without the *imaginary idea* of a human *body*. Though both these natural powers be exerted, they come not near to the divine and supernatural power of faith; which acts in another sphere, and, as it were, in the third heavens, far above both the former. Shall faith in its act or object be considered by that which relates to the lowest sphere wherein men move, because the subject of inhesion wherein that faith is wrought, hath an animal life while in time? Is it like the speech of a rational man, or of a fool, to say, so frequently, and so solemnly, that a man cannot possibly believe in Christ, without having an animal life, or sensitive faculties? It were more agreeable to the common notion of the rational world, to say, none can believe in Christ, unless he has reason and reflexion, such as men have, than to say, he cannot believe in Christ, unless he hath animal powers and sensation; wherein brute beasts have such a great share with us, though they are destitute of reason. How ridiculous would it be to say, no man can possibly move or work with his *fingers*, without moving the *nails* that are upon the points of them; nor walk from one place to another, without drawing his *heels* after him? Why, it is very true, he cannot well shake off his nails when he works, nor lay aside his heels when he walks, because they are natural to the make of his body; yet it may be possible for him to work, and never touch his work with his nails; and also to walk, and yet never touch the ground with his heels. But, suppose he can

neither work nor walk without them, how unreasonable is it to describe his working and walking by this limitation or *sine qua non*, that without nails and heels he can do neither? Much more unreasonable is it, to describe the actings of that superior and supernatural power of faith by this limitation, that they cannot take place without the company and concurrence of that inferior faculty of an imaginary or corporeal idea; which yet can by no means take up the invisible object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his person and Glory. Christ's divine person is absolutely invisible to us, 1 *Tim.* vi. 16. His Glory also is invisible; only faith can behold it in the Gospel-glass, where it is represented, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. But the darkness and superstition of the minds of men have brought in images, to take the work of representing Christ and his Glory out of the hands of the Gospel; being able to make no affecting discovery of him in the word, through their want of spiritual light, to make him the present object of their faith and love, as revealed and proposed in the Gospel. This was the true origin of all the *imageries* in the church of *Rome*, and other image-worshipt Christ in his human nature being absent, and their minds being dark, carnal, and prone to superstition, as the minds of all men are by nature, they would see nothing in the spiritual representation of him in the Gospel, that did in any measure affect them: But in these images, as one says †, by the means of sight and imagination, they found that which did really work upon their affections, and, as they thought, did excite them to the love of Christ. Men not being able by the light of faith to discern the glory of things spiritual and invisible, do make images of them to themselves, as gods that may go before them: And these they are affected with; because these they can see and feel, and, in their own imagination, are sensibly excited unto devotion by them. But the worship of the church is spiritual, and the glory of it is invisible unto the eyes of flesh; as both our Saviour and his Apostles testify in the celebration of it: *We are come unto mount Zion*, &c. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. The glory of this assembly does not appear to the sense and imaginations of men. See much more to this purpose in the *Morning exercises against Popery, vol.* V. *p.* 231.

We may view the whole strength of Mr. *Robe*'s logick relating to the imaginary idea of Christ as man, its being helpful to the faith of his being God-man, in the following example. I am told, that *such a person is a good man.* Here, according to a logical division, we have, (1.) The subject,

† *Morning Exercises against Popery, Vol.* V. *p.* 223. 229. 231.

subject, namely, *a man.* (2.) The predicate, or what is told of him, namely, *goodness.* (3.) The *copula*, or copulation and conjunction of these two together, namely, that he is a *good man.* Now, to form a right thought that such a man is a good man, I shall allow all these three, according to Mr. *Robe*'s method, to be right. (1.) There is an imaginary idea we must have of that person as a man. (2.) An intellectual idea of goodness. (3.) A copulative or compounded idea joining these former two together. And so, by these three, we have a compleat idea of him as a good man. And we cannot have the faith or belief of this, That he is a good man, without the imaginary idea of him as a man. Well, here is good enough natural logick; and this is the natural order wherein we conceive of natural things; though at the same time it is evident, the *imaginary idea of the subject* gives no help of itself to the *intellectual idea of the predicate.* Even though I cannot think of *goodness*, without thinking of a *subject* of inhesion wherein it resides, I must not dwell upon, or stand poring on the image of the man; for the more I do so, the more I am hindered from the notion of goodness. The corporeal idea does not further, but hinder my understanding. Much more is it thus in spiritual things.

But this foresaid logick Mr. *Robe* applies very absurdly to the knowledge of God in Christ, or to the knowledge of Christ, and the faith of his being God-man in one person; which not at all suits with any natural example of that sort: For here it is not man that is the subject, but God, or the person of the Son of God. Though I am not here to dispute the natural order of ideas that philosophers speak of, and their rise and origin from sensation and reflexion, but allow the first thing that presents itself in the foresaid example of a good man, is the *subject* of that predicate, namely, the idea of a man; yet I do not allow, that this order will hold in spiritual things, that are the object of saving faith; particularly in that which Mr. *Robe* speaks of concerning *Christ as man*; where he makes the first thing pertaining to the knowledge of him, to be an imaginary idea of Christ as man. This I deny; and would illustrate the contrary by the following plain proposition. For example, this, *That Christ is man.* In this example, it is easy to see, that it is not in this, as in the former example of a *good man*, where *man* was the *subject*, and *goodness* the *predicate*; and therefore the *man*, in order of nature, was first in the imagination, and then *goodness*, as the thing asserted of him.

But

But in this example it is quite otherwise. Christ is the subject, and man is the predicate; that is to say, here is, (1.) The subject spoken of, namely, *Christ*; which is the name of a person. (2.) The predicate, or that which is said of him, namely, *that he is man.* Here then Mr. *Robe*'s philosophy will be found vain and idle, if not profane and absurd. For, to make the first thing here, in order to believe that Christ is man, to be an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is, to suppose that *man* is the *subject*, and Christ the *predicate*; which none that have common sense, will aver: And yet to set the *predicate, man,* before the *subject, Christ,* here would be both a setting the object of sense before the object of faith, as he does, and an inverting his own order, and transgressing the common rule of natural philosophy; which supposes indeed, that the subject or person is the first thing to be known, and then the predicate, or what is said of that subject or person.

Thus, on the same head, when it is said, *The Word was made flesh,* or God was manifested in the flesh, or in the human nature; here it is plain, the *subject* is God, or the Word; the *predicate* is flesh, or the human nature. The first thing, therefore, in the knowledge of this mystery is not the imaginary idea of Christ as flesh; for that is but the predicate, and cannot be known in its relation to the subject, till the subject itself be known, namely, God; in whom, and no otherwise, that human nature of Christ does subsist: And, consequently, we can have no saving knowledge of Christ in his human nature, or as man, till we know him as God, and thus as God in Christ, God in our nature, not our nature in God, as if our nature were the first thing discernible in saving knowledge; but God in our nature; for our nature cannot be, nor be seen to be any part of the proper object of faith, till it be seen subsisting in the person of the Son of God; which cannot be seen by any imaginary idea, but only by faith. Christ being the name of a person, to see the man Christ, is to see the person of the Son of God, to be now God-man, or Immanuel God with us. When we see God, or his Glory, in the face of Christ, it is in the person of Christ; not in him as man, but as God-man in one person.

As God only is the proper object of faith and worship, and Christ as the eternal Son of God is so, as well as any other person in the adorable Trinity; so the person of Christ as Mediator, may be considered, either with reference to his divine nature, or his human nature; the human nature, being assumed, is

not

not the natural or proper, but rather (if I may use this word) the adventitious object of faith and worship, namely, by reason of its conjunction or union with the person of the Son of God.

Now, the imaginary idea cannot see it in this conjunction; and therefore cannot see it as it is the object of faith or of worship. What a man sees of Christ only by his imaginary idea, is only coporeal; and therefore, not being God, it is not lawful for him to worship what he thus sees: Nor is lawful for him to make it the object of his faith, because it is not God; it is only an image of a man formed in his brain: It is not the person of Christ, but the picture of Christ, in his human body that he sees there. But, says Mr. *Robe*, Christ as God-man cannot be conceived, without the imaginary idea of him as man. *Answer*. Christ as God-man is an inconceivable mystery, which cannot be seen, but by that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen*. An imaginary idea of any thing corporeal spoken of, is a thing that belongs to the imaginative faculty of the person that believes, and of which he cannot be free while clothed with flesh. But this imaginary idea of what is merely corporeal in Christ, belongs neither to the *act* nor the *object* of faith, nor to the *means* of it, as subservient thereto. (1.) Not to an *act* of faith; for faith is an act of the understanding, carrying the will with it; I mean, of the understanding spiritualized, or spiritually enlightened. Nor, (2.) Does it belong to the *object* of faith: For no corporeal thing as such is the object of faith, but of sense. The corporeity, or human natural body of Christ, can no more of itself, as it is the object of imagination, be the object of faith, than any other human body can be so. Nor, (3.) Does it belong to *means* of faith, as any way subservient or helpful thereunto. The corporeal faculties of sense and imagination are indeed helpful to give me the notion of a body, or outside of a man; but it cannot help me to know or believe any truth; no, not so much as this truth, *That Adam was a man*, or that he was *the first man*. Now, Mr. *Robe*'s logick tells me to this purpose, I cannot believe that *Adam* was a man, or that he was the first man, without an imaginary idea of him as a man; and that this idea is helpful to my believing him to be so. I answer, it is false: For, though this imaginary idea helps me to form in my mind the image of a man, not the image of a house, or a horse, but of a man; yet it cannot help me to know or believe any truth reported concerning that man. All the help the imaginary

ginary idea can give me to the knowledge and belief that *Adam* was a man, or the first man, is only to make me to conceive that *Adam* was neither a bird in the air, nor a beast of the field, nor a fish of the sea; but a man, or such a corporeal object which common sense distinguishes from all other corporeal objects, by the name and designation of a *man*. This is all the imaginary idea helps unto. But can it help me or any person to know and believe this truth, which I have learned from tradition, or from the Bible, *That Adam was a man*, and *the first man?* Nay, the imaginary idea of him as a man, the more I dwell upon it, the more doth it mar, and hinder, and divert me from the knowledge and belief of this truth, That *he was a man*, and, *that he was the first man*. Nay, if I had no more but the imaginary idea of him as a man, I would neither have the knowledge nor belief of this *proposition*, That he was a man, nor that he was the first man. Truths and propositions are the objects of intellectual ideas; but cannot be the objects of corporeal, sensitive, or imaginary ideas.

In consequence of what hath been said, let the truth or proposition to be known or believed, be this, *That Christ the second Adam was a man.* Now, says Mr. *Robe*, you cannot believe that Christ was a man, without an imaginary idea of him as man. And this idea is helpful and absolutely necessary; because you cannot know or believe in him as God-man, without the imaginary idea of him as man. *Answer.* This philosophy and logick is false and fallacious; as appears in this, That, though I cannot believe him to be man, unless I had the idea of what a man is, or know the meaning of the word man, that it signifies neither a creature of the angelical or brutal, but of the human kind; yet what says this to the believing of this *truth*, That he is man? That Christ the second *Adam* is man, is a truth to be believed, and an object of faith; but the imaginary idea of him as man, makes him the object of sense and fancy, and not of faith. It is a mental image, and picture of his human body in the brain, that ought neither to be worshipped nor believed in: Nor can it be done without idolatry; because we are forbid to worship God by any image of our making or forming. The true Christ, our Immanuel God-man, is the only image of the invisible God, whom we are to adore, and by whom alone we are to believe in God, and worship him. But the image of Christ formed in the head by an imaginary idea of him as man, is not the true Christ, but a creature in the notion, a picture of his body

in

in the brain; not so much as the object of an intellectual idea, but a sensitive; by the means whereof we cannot believe any truth whatsoever, human or divine.

See this in the most common things in the world. Let the assertion be, That *Simon the tanner had a house.* Why, says Mr. *Robe*'s logick, you cannot believe this without the imaginary idea of a *house. Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-hamon.* Well, but you cannot believe this without the imaginary idea of a vineyard. What childish work is this way of speaking? Though all that the imaginary idea helps me to, is to understand the meaning of the word *house*, and the word *vineyard*; that a house does not signify a *horse*, nor a vineyard a *river*, but that a house and a vineyard signify those things that the words represent to our mind: Yet none of these ideas contribute in the least to my believing the truth of these assertions, That either *Simon* had a house, or *Solomon* a vineyard; for the belief thereof is no way founded upon the meaning of the words, or idea of the outward things, but upon the testimony of the asserter, *&c.* Thus, when in spiritual things we speak of any truth, such as, That *Christ is man*, the imaginary idea of him as man, is only at best a help to know the meaning of the word *man*, or an image in the head of that corporeal object which we call a *man:* But this in itself hath no tendency to help or further the faith of this truth, That *Christ is man.* The belief of this is founded only upon the word of God, and on the same testimony on which we believe *that he is God*, and God-man in one person.

To think of Christ *that* he is man, is a profitable and necessary thought; because it can be thought of believingly, as a divine truth: But to think of him *qua* man, or *as* man, is a diverting the mind from the object of faith, to an object of sense, and a vain idle and unprofitable attempt to *know Christ after the flesh*, or carnally, by a sensitive idea, not spiritually, by faith. But now, to say, we cannot know him spiritually by faith, without that sensitive idea, is all one as to say, we cannot *know him after the spirit*, without *knowing him after the flesh.* Well, what though this be a sad truth, yet these two ways of knowing him are as opposite as flesh and spirit, sin and duty. But to make the sinful and natural way of knowing him necessary to the dutiful and spiritual way, or the imaginary way necessary to the real, is vain philosophy, and abominable divinity.

When one thinks rightly of Christ as man, he thinks believingly. To think believingly, is to think according to

the word of revelation, that he hath a true body and a reasonable soul. To believe this, is not to have the imaginary idea of it, as if it were a corporeal object of sense, but to credit it as it is a divine truth, as much, and upon the same ground, as I believe that he is God; for both are believed upon the same testimony. Though it be corporeal; yet, as corporeal, it is not the object of faith, but of sense: But, as the object of faith, it is in the word, not in the head or the brain.

If Mr. *Robe* had said, We cannot believe Christ to be God-man, without *believing him to be man,* I would agree with that; for I make the human nature of Christ, as represented in the word, the object of faith. But, when he says, we cannot believe him to be God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, and that this is a necessary help to faith; this is what I reject, as a mixing of faith and sense, and a making, not divine revelation, but human sensation, a ground and means of faith. I reject it as a doctrine *that causes to err from the words of knowledge,* Prov. xix. 27. a doctrine that leads to imaginary faith and worship, and to a fostering in the minds of people that mental idolatry, which may open the door to gross outward idolatry. To believe that *Christ is man,* is to believe that this glorious person Christ, is clothed with our human nature, or, that he hath assumed our nature into his own personality. And thus to believe that Christ is man, is one of the most necessary articles of the Christian faith, without which there is no believing unto salvation. But to conceive of Christ as man by an imaginary idea, the object whereof is not at all Christ, but a mere human corporeal substance; this imaginary conception joined in with faith, is a confounding of faith and fancy; a blending together things as opposite as flesh and spirit, nature and grace; which, though they be both residing in the same subject, namely, the believer, yet are as opposite as faith and unbelief. The imaginary idea of Christ as man is a *fleshly* consideration, flowing from nature, and most unprofitable and unhelpful to faith. But the faith of this truth, That *Christ is man,* includes a *spiritual* consideration of him, flowing from grace in the heart. Both these considerations may be in the same subject, and, perhaps too, much about the same time; but they are direct opposites, as much as spiritual light and spiritual darkness; which they that attempt to mix, are for mixing heaven and hell together.

Sensitive ideas can no more of themselves help to produce intellectu-

intellectual ones, than bodies can help to produce spirits; nor mere sense to produce reason, nor the animal to produce the rational life. And again, sense and reason of themselves can no more produce faith, than nature can produce grace; earth, heaven; or natural produce spiritual and supernatural life. But, if one shall say, in behalf of Mr. *Robe*, that without sense a man cannot have reason; and, without sense and reason, he cannot have faith; therefore the one is helpful to the other: This will easily be granted in one respect, but not in another. It is true in respect of the *subjects* that are acted upon, but not in respect of the *activity* of the subjects. Sense, reason, and the light of nature, are the passive qualifications of the subject for faith; because there cannot be faith in a stone or in a beast, no more than there can be sin in them: Therefore sense and reason make a man in a passive capacity fit for grace, tho' he have no active ability for it. In this respect, a thing may be said to be necessary in a natural or physical sense, or passively and subjectively; but this no way belongs to what is necessary and helpful in a moral or theological sense, or in any sense that is within the sphere of activity proper to it. Sense and reason act in their own different spheres, but faith in a superior orb, not at all ruled or assisted by natural reason itself: Which yet is highly useful many ways, in so far as it is first enlightened by revelation, or ruled and assisted by the divine word and a divine faith. Sense and natural reason then are no otherwise necessary to faith than this, that the subject of faith be a rational creature, a man, and not a stone. And to say that this is an absolutely necessary help to faith, is just to answer a grave question in divinity with a poor quirk of logick; and a blending together those things that are quite different. For example: If I should ask a question relating to the art of architecture, what is necessary to the *artful* building of a fine house? and the answer is, stones or brick are absolutely necessary, because without stones or brick he cannot build a fine house; the answer might be reckoned very ridiculous, however true, because it is out of purpose, and relates only to the *materials* of the building, but not at all to the *art* of it. Even so much and more out of the way is it to assert, that there is no believing in Christ as God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man. It is a blending of things quite different, yea, and directly opposite, so far as sense is opposite to faith, and nature to grace.

I am perswaded, many exercised souls find to be their sin that very thing which Mr. *Robe* represents as a duty necessary

to a right thinking of Christ as God-man in one person, namely, that they have an imaginary idea of him as man. It costs them many heavy thoughts and tears, lest they be worshipping but an image of their own framing, an idol and representation of a man formed in their mind by their own imagination, instead of the true God in Christ, or God in our nature. This is matter of exercise to them, that, their mind being naturally carnal, they are so ready to have carnal views of this spiritual object of faith. No doubt the carnal conceptions of Christ as man, that through the flesh are unavoidable and involuntary, the Lord will pardon in his own, who strive, through his grace, to act spiritually and believingly. But, to preach up the necessity of that which all the true saints of God will find to be their plague, is one of the dreadful effects of the delusion of the day we live in.

An imaginary idea hath no more knowledge in it, than the scripture ascribes to an ox that knows his owner, or an ass that knows his master's crib, *Isa.* i. 3. It is no part of rational knowledge: I say again, that the imaginary idea of Christ as man is no part, no branch in it self, of rational knowledge; far less of revealed religion. It belongs not to the rational, but the brutish part of a man. No man guided by reason and judgment, far less by the Spirit of God, could bring in this as any help to, or any part of religion; which belongs not to the knowledge that is in rational creatures as such, but rather to the knowledge brute beasts have an equal share of with men, 2 *Pet.* ii. 12. where some men are compared to *natural brute beasts.* And, *Jude*, vers. 10. it is said, that some *speak evil of the things which they know not: But what they know naturally as brute beasts; in those things they corrupt themselves.* Where we see, that brute beasts have a natural knowledge, that is without reason and judgment. Such a knowledge is an imaginary idea of any corporeal thing. This is a knowledge that all men have, in so far as they have but the sensitive life of brutes. None can speak of a bird in the air, a beast in the field, or fish in the sea, or whatever else, but presently the imaginary idea or image of that bodily thing spoke of, will be formed in the brain: Whether it be absent, if it be but spoke of into the ear, or present to the eye, the image of it is in the head. And so far even a brute beast. A dog, though he hath not the understanding of words, yet hath an imaginary idea of his master, whether present or absent. If he be present, he shews it by fawning upon him, or waiting his motions; if absent, by seeking after him, and distinguishing between him and

and thousands of other men in a crowd. The imaginary idea of Christ as man, an absent man, this idea having no other object, but what is corporeal, how far it differs from the natural knowledge of a brute beast, may be easily considered. The great difference lies in the *subject*; but neither in the *act*, nor *object*, nor *faculty* acting upon it. The *act* is the imaginary idea, which brutes may have; the *object* is a man as he is a corporeal thing, which also the brute hath an idea of; the *faculty* is the sensitive corporeal power, which the brute beasts also have: Only the *subject* or agent here is a rational creature, not acting rationally, like himself, by the right use of natural reason. But, while he hath no more than that imaginary idea acting, so as to confine his act within the narrow bounds of his natural sensation or imagination, he can know no more, but what he knows naturally as brute beasts. And what things men know this way, *in those things they corrupt themselves*, says the Apostle. Where, if he speaks of sensual corruptions and brutish lusts, the argument holds the more strongly with relation to mens corrupting and defiling their minds by carnal images or brutish imaginations of spiritual things; and that, in so far as filthiness of the spirit is yet more abominable before God than that of the flesh. This brutish knowledge is particularly spoke of in scripture with reference to idolaters; and, being applied to gross idolatry, is equally applicable to mental imagery, which is the secret chamber, from which all outward images are brought: *Jer.* x. 14, 15, 16. *Every man is brutish in his knowledge: Every founder is confounded by the graven image; for his molten image is falshood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: In the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: For he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name.* It was said, *vers.* 8. *They are altogether brutish and foolish: The stock is a doctrine of vanities.* And the same words are repeated, *chap.* li. 17, 18, 19. Of this brutish knowledge also we read, *Hos.* xiii. 2. where it is said, *they made them idols according to their own understanding*; that is, says *Henry*, " according to their " own fancy. They consulted with themselves what shape they " should make it in, and made it accordingly: *a god*, according " to the *best of their judgment*, or, *according to their own* " *likeness*, in the form of a man. And, when they made " their idols, men like themselves in *shape*, they made themselves stocks and stones like them in *reality*: For *they that* " *made them, are like unto them; and so is every one that trust-*

" *eth*

"*eth in them*, Pſal. cxv. 8." Idols and images are firſt the work of mens *heads*, and then the work of their *hands*. They are ſhaped firſt by their *fancy*, and then by their *fingers*; becauſe *what they know naturally as brute beaſts; in theſe things they corrupt themſelves.* All the *Popiſh* pictures of Chriſt are owing to this natural knowledge or imaginary idea of Chriſt as man. Thus we may ſee what ſort of knowledge Mr. *Robe*'s ideal doctrine belongs to. The natural underſtanding of man, as man, is *with* reaſon and judgment; but what they know naturally *without* theſe, is no other than that of brute beaſts, which have ſenſe and imagination. And Mr. *Robe* himſelf diſtinguiſhes ſeveral times between theſe corporeal faculties that diſcern no more but corporeal things, and the faculty of underſtanding; conſequently, his imaginary ideas are no other part of natural underſtanding, than that of brute beaſts, without reaſon and judgment. It is true, in his letter, he frequently confounds his imaginary ideas with knowledge, as if *to know that Chriſt is man*, and *to have an imaginary idea of him as man*, were alternatives, or one and the ſame thing. But, as his explication of the objects of all his imaginary ideas, making them merely corporeal, will not quadrate with its being the ſame with the knowledge of any truth; ſo, if, notwithſtanding this, he makes his knowledge and his imaginary idea the ſame, then, either by his ſenſitive knowledge he means rational, or by rational he means ſenſitive; or elſe they are ſo blended by him, as to have no meaning at all, while reaſon is not employed to diſtinguiſh the one from the other.

Alas! his carnal and natural imagination of a corporeal object, which is called Chriſt as man, does nothing but darken and abuſe his underſtanding, and deſtroys all right thoughts and conceptions of Chriſt, till God in mercy blow away that dark cloud, and ſend forth his light and his truth.

An imaginary idea then relates to ſome other thing than either the rational knowledge, or the real faith and belief of Chriſt's being God-man. It relates only to what is corporeal, and what may be ſeen or fancied; but to nothing intelligible or credible: For it is neither the object of faith nor of unbelief. It is neither a truth nor a falſhood in itſelf; but, as it is applied to the true Chriſt, it is a falſe and fictitious repreſentation of him.

I ſhall further exemplify both the fallacy and folly of Mr. *Robe*'s argument, from ſome homely ſimilies, ſhewing, that no propoſition relating to any the moſt common truths, can be the object of an imaginary idea. For example; let one at a diſtance

distance be told, that *there is a man called Mr. Robe that is Minister in Kilsyth.* Why, says Mr. *Robe*, he cannot believe this; nay, I defy him, and says it is impossible, (for in this manner he speaks) to believe it without the imaginary idea of *a man.* Very true; and I shall add, he cannot do it, without the imaginary idea of a place called *Kilsyth.* Nay, besides this, I shall add, he must have an intellectual idea of a *Minister*; for that is the name of an office which none can make an image of in his brain, unless he should paint there the likeness of a man in a pulpit, with a Bible in his hand, and call that a Minister. But the ministerial office, as such, requires *intellectuals* to form a right idea of it. But, though this should be added to the former, let any man tell me, whether it be agreeable with good sense to say, that none can believe that Mr. *Robe* is a man that is a Minister in *Kilsyth*, without the imaginary idea of a *man* and a *place* so designed? Or, suppose that should be easily granted; yet what help does that imaginary idea give to his belief of that truth? since the truth of that proposition must depend upon the testimony of him that informs this man at a distance anent it, and not upon his imaginary idea of a *man* and of a *place*; for these are corporeal things, and visible, that are the objects of sense: But the truth of the proposition, being an incorporeal thing, cannot be received by *sense*, but by reason and judgment, convinced of it upon the credit and fidelity of the informer. Nay, I will say further, that the imaginary idea or mental image of a man cannot so much as help me to believe *that Mr. Robe is a man.* This I will prove by what follows. *That he is a man*, is a proposition or assertion: And no imaginary idea can conceive a proposition or assertion of any truth, unless that proposition had a corporeal form; which if it had, it would not be a thing to be believed, but a thing to be seen or fancied. That idea may conceive the matter of the proposition, *viz.* a human body; but that matter, being a corporeal thing, is in itself neither a truth nor a falshood; and therefore can neither be believed nor disbelieved, till something be proposed or asserted concerning it. Which proposition or assertion, be what it will, is the object of an intellectual idea, but not of an imaginative one. Therefore the imaginary idea of a man cannot so much as help me to believe that Mr. *Robe* is a man, or that he has a body like other men. Common philosophy teacheth, according to *Aristotle* and his followers, *That acts of the intellect, called simple apprehensions, have neither truth nor falshood for their object*; while nothing is therein either affirmed or denied. What help then can Mr. *Robe*'s imagi-

nary

nary idea he talks of give me in order to believe that he is a man; seeing this idea neither affirms nor denies it? Why, says his argument, this idea is absolutely necessary, because it is impossible for you to believe any man is a Minister, without the imaginary idea of a man, and Mr. *Robe* is as surely a man as he is a Minister. Here is a strong and unanswerable-like assertion; but yet to no purpose: For still the question remains untouched, What help does the imaginary idea of a man afford me to believe that Mr. *Robe* is a man or a Minister? If it be told or affirmed, that he is a man, then I have some ground to believe or not. The report may indeed help; but the imaginary idea tells me nothing at all about him, but leaves me to form in my head what image of him I please, an ordinary or a monstrous man. But (says he) you cannot believe what you have no conception of. Well; but still, the question being not about the rational conception of a truth or a falsehood, but an imaginary conception of what is corporeal; if this conception, not the report, be the rule of my belief, and a help to it, then I am obliged to believe according to my conception: and consequently, at this rate, if my imaginary idea conceive of him as a monster, I am obliged to believe it. Here then we see what is the sum total of Mr. *Robe*'s philosophy, and what issue it comes to. If he should infer from what I have just now said, that I do not believe him to be a man, because I say an imaginary idea can give me no help to believe it; the inference would be as native and judicious, as that wherein he charged me with heresy and blasphemy. Though the subjects infinitely differ; yet the cases in point of argument are parallel.

Further, let this be the truth mentioned, namely, *That Paul was an Apostle.* Now, according to Mr. *Robe*, here is requisite, *first*, an imaginary idea of a *man*; for *Paul* is the name of a *man*. *2dly*, An intellectual idea of an *Apostle*; which, being the name of an office, cannot be the object of a corporeal or imaginative idea. Now, what help to the belief of this truth is the first of these ideas, namely, the imaginary idea of a man? The more I dwell upon this idea of a man, the farther I am from the belief of this truth, That *Paul was an Apostle*; for that idea does not concern the truth at all, but merely the corporeal image of a man in the head: Which the more I continue to gaze at, the more I am detained from the belief of the truth, That *he was an Apostle.* That image is no part of the object of that faith at all. Some say, he was a little man; and so they form the image of a little man. Whatever man he was, little or big,

is

is that any part of the object of this faith, namely, my believing he was an Apostle? But, says Mr. *Robe*'s argument, it is impossible for you to believe that the man *Paul* was an Apostle, without the imaginary idea of a man: Therefore this is absolutely necessary to that faith; because he was as surely a man as he was an Apostle. May not any person see what an idle story this is; and how it is a confounding the object of faith with the object of sense and fancy; and a making that necessary to faith which has no relation to it, and is nothing but a solemn trifling? If any say, you cannot think of a heart of stone, without the imaginary idea of a stone; therefore that idea is such an absolutely necessary part of knowledge, that without it you cannot know what a heart of stone is. Is not here a miserable confounding the sensitive with the rational part of a man; yea, sensitive ideas with spiritual knowledge, most absurdly? A stone may give occasion, but no help, to think of heart-obduration or hardness; which is a spiritual plague of the heart, that cannot be known or seen but with a spiritual eye. The sight or thought of the material hardness of a stone can give no proper help. Separate the sensitive from the rational part, there is no more knowledge in the former than some beasts have, which know the difference between a man and a stone, as well as we can do, with all our mere sensitive powers. It is indeed impossible to believe that Christ is God-man, without having the faith of his human nature. But it is impossible to have the faith so much as of his being man, or of his human nature, while we have but an imaginary idea of him as man; which while it lasts, we are under the necessity of suspending the thoughts of his being God, and so of giving way to Atheism. To say or suppose, that we cannot believe that Christ is God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, which is that moment an abstracting from the consideration of his being God, by turning to the sensitive idea of a human body, which is no man; is it not as good sense for me to say, that Mr. *Robe*, without the idea of a worm, cannot believe this scriptural position, *Psal.* xxii. 6. namely, *That Christ is a worm, and no man?* which is an abstracting from the consideration of his being *man*, and betaking himself to the sensitive or corporeal idea of a *worm*; for these are both true, *That Christ as man is not God*, and, *That Christ as a worm is no man.* Hence common sense may infer, that, at this rate, we cannot believe that Christ is God-man without an imaginary idea, importing, that he is neither God nor man. It is little wonder, when Mr. *Robe* goes out

of God's way in matters of faith, into the field of vain imaginations, that he involve himself in the mire of inextricable absurdities.

While Mr. *Robe* says, the imaginary idea helps one to believe, it would be considered, things are not *credible* because they are *imaginable*; otherwise indeed the imagination would help to believe. But, though some things utterable are not credible, because they are not imaginable, (as, if one should speak of a mountain without a valley, this, we may say, cannot be believed, because it cannot be imagined); yet things are not therefore credible because they are imaginable. For example, a *golden mountain:* Every man that can form an image of gold, and an image of a mountain, can also, whenever he hears of a golden mountain, form the image of it in his brain; yea, necessarily does so, upon hearing of it with attention. Now, if one shall assert, that a hill near *Kilsyth*, commonly called, *Take me down*, is a golden mountain, only hid and covered with a little earth and grass, Mr. *Robe* says, he cannot believe this, without the imaginary idea of a *golden mountain*. Well; but, if this idea makes it credible, or helps him to believe it, then he may try his hand, by digging in order to inrich himself. But to bring the simile yet nearer to his way of arguing: Will this idea of a mountain help him to believe it is a golden mountain; because it is impossible for him to believe it is so, without the imaginary idea of a mountain? By no means can these help one another; because the one being imaginable, does not make the other credible; and that in regard that things *imaginable*, as such, are not within the same circle of knowledge with the same things as they are *credible*: They relate not to ideas of the same kind; but the one to the ideas of *sense* or sensation, the other to these of *reason*, or intellection. Far less will it hold true, that the imaginary idea of Christ as man, will help to believe that he is God-man. For, as this is a matter of faith, both the manhood and God-head are within the same circle of knowledge, grounded upon divine revelation, namely, spiritual rational knowledge. But, to bring in an imaginary idea here, is to go down below the sphere of reason itself, into the depth of sensation, for help and assistance to faith.

I have shewed elsewhere, that the imaginary idea of Christ as man cannot help to believe that he is man. But if, according to Mr. *Robe*, it can help to believe that he is God-man, it seems to import this gross absurdity, that, because he is God-man, the imaginary idea of him as man will help to believe that he is God; because he is man, as well as God,

in

in one person. If this be not the intention of the *speaker*, (as the schools say, *Intentio operis est operantis*) it is the intention of the *speech*. But, as it would be absurd to say, one cannot believe the saints at the resurrection will have a *spiritual body*, without the imaginary idea of a body, and that this idea of a body helps to believe it to be a *spiritual body* so it is equally absurd to say, the imaginary idea of Christ as *man*, helps to believe that he is *God-man*; because this is a blending of what belongs to sense with what belongs to faith.

Mr. *Robe* seems miserably to confound the subject believing, with the means and helps of faith. The subject believing, is one that hath sense and reason, one that hath a sensitive idea to apprehend bodies that are the objects of sense; and an intellectual idea to apprehend things incorporeal, according to the measure and capacity of his reason and judgment: Which surely one would think, renders him more capable to understand the objects of faith, than all the imaginary ideas in the world. Now, though the object of faith can be no visible thing, or corporeal; yet, if that object have an adjunct, or something *adventitious*, as I said before, relating to it, that is corporeal, and so not the proper object of faith in itself, but only as it is related to faith's proper object; who will adventure to say, that that adjunct, or *adventitious thing*, is properly, or in itself, any part of the object of faith; because, being corporeal, none can take up the proper object of faith, without an imaginary idea of it? Or to say, that this idea is helpful to that faith? All the matter is, he is a subject of faith, that hath an imaginary idea of corporeal things. While we live in this body, the soul and body live together, which makes up a human person. And therefore the sum of Mr. *Robe*'s logick on this head is, that, seeing soul and body make one person, he cannot believe he hath a *soul* without the imaginary idea of a *body*. Alas! what a miserable help is this to the faith of his having an *immortal soul*, that he cannot believe it without the imaginary idea of a *mortal body*; nor believe there is a *spirit* in him, without an imaginary idea of flesh? But, let him multiply these ideas *in infinitum*, he will be as wise about the nature of spirits as he was at first. What though, while he knows the soul and body are unite in one human nature, the sensitive idea relating to the body naturally intrude itself into the company of the intellectual idea, that thinks upon a spirit, which consists of no corporeal thing, but merely of *understanding*, *will*, and the like spiritual things? Does the presence of the foresaid *intruder*, presenting the image

of a body, give him any help or assistance in the knowledge of the nature of the soul, or the belief of its being? Nay, I trow, that object of sense, or image by the sensitive idea, will rather tend to give him a wrong notion of that which is the proper object of the intellectual idea. Even so does the imaginary idea of Christ as man, intruding itself into the company of faith, instead of being helpful or profitable, tend only to give mishapen notions of the proper object of faith.

Again, to add no more to the number of examples, let one suppose for a truth, that there is a *man* in the *moon*: The first thing, according to Mr. *Robe*'s argument, that is absolutely necessary for believing this, is, that you have an imaginary idea of a man. Why so? Because it is impossible for you to believe that there is a man in the moon, without this idea. Very true; none can hear of a man any where, but it presently raises the idea of a man in his head. But will any person say, that this idea of a man in the moon will help me to believe that there is a man there? Or is this fanciful idea any part of the object of that belief? But, when this argument is applied to spiritual things, such solemn trifling in the matters of God is intolerable.

I am almost ashamed to be obliged so oft to repeat this childish and foolish manner of speech, with application to such a great and grave subject, as that of believing in the Son of God, or believing in him as God-man. Why? This idea of Christ as man, is so far from being absolutely necessary and helpful to the faith of this mysterious object, a God-man, that it cannot in the least help me to believe, as I said before, *that he is man*: Nay, as it excludes necessarily the faith of his being God, because as man he is not God; so it includes not the faith of his being man; for this truth, *That he is man*, is a scripture-truth, an object of faith, and so no object of any imaginary idea. Yea, this imaginary idea of Christ as man, not only does not include the faith of this truth, *That he is man*, but excludes it also; in so far as sense and sight exclude faith and believing. For, when the *figure of a man*, or the *figure of a cross*, as Mr. *Robe* speaks, is before the eyes of the mind, then it is no object of faith, but of sight. So that the imaginary idea of Christ as man, instead of helping to believe in him as God-man, will rather help to believe that he is neither God nor man; for it excludes the faith of both. But I must tell Mr. *Robe*, that it is impossible for any to believe savingly, that Christ is God-man, without having the faith of his human nature, as well as

as of his divine, in one person; because the faith of that person thus clothed with our nature, includes both: Whereas it is impossible to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, without excluding, by that idea, the faith of his being either God or man; because the image or dagon of sense, as long as it stands, is directly opposite to the ark of faith.

Again, an imaginary idea of Christ as man, whether it be considered subjectively or objectively, I mean, in the view itself by the fancy and imagination, or in the object viewed, a human creature, belongs not even to Christian *morals*, far less to Christian *mysteries*. It belongs neither to moral philosophy, nor to Christian knowledge, nor practice, but merely to things natural and animal, as such. Let me exemplify this, in the first question in our catechism, *What is the chief end of man?* According to Mr. *Robe*, the first thing requisite and necessary to the knowing of man's chief end, is to have an imaginary idea of man †. Why? Because it is impossible to know man's chief end without it. Very true; but here is such a confounding and blending of things that are every way distinct, that any man of sense would accuse him of blockish stupidity, that would make this one of the means or helps for knowing what the chief end of man is; because that imaginary idea of man belongs not at all to this subject. It belongs to *Physicks*, but not to *Ethicks*; that is, to *naturals*, but not to *morals*; to the mind, as it is conversant about bodily things, but not about spirituals. In a word, it belongs to *sense*, not to *faith*; to *nature*, not to *grace*, or *religion*. It belongs not so much as even to *natural religion*, but merely to *natural sensation*; yea, not to *natural reflexion*, as it is a mere imaginary idea. And hence, though it is true, that none can know what is man's chief end without an imaginary idea of man; yet so extraneous is this to that point of knowledge, that, instead of being helpful to it, I appeal to all mankind that have the use of natural reason, if an imaginary idea of a man, so far as it is pored upon, would not be a manifest impediment and hinderance to the knowledge of this point of divinity, relating to *man's chief end*?

Likewise Mr. *Robe* making this the first thing that belongs to the knowledge of Christ, or to a right thinking of him, namely, to have an imaginary idea of him as man, it is a beginning to think of him, by denying that he is God; because, seeing as man he is not God, to maintain that this is the first thing that belongs to the right knowledge and thought

† To speak in Mr. *Robe*'s language; for I own, man, or mankind, being an universal term, cannot be the object of that idea.

thought of him, is to maintain that we ought to think of him in a way wherein he is not God, or to conceive of him in a ſenſe wherein he is neither a God, nor a perſon, nor a ſubject wherein that which we think of, does exiſt. The ſubject wherein that humanity exiſts, being his *divine perſon*, which cannot be the object of any imaginary idea; to begin therefore to think of Chriſt by an imaginary idea of him as man, is to begin with Atheiſm, or with a thought that neceſſarily excludes his Deity, and cannot include it; becauſe Chriſt as man cannot be God. Therefore, as long as he uſes that firſt help, namely, an imaginary idea of him as man, he brings himſelf under a neceſſity of denying that he is God, as the firſt mean of believing that he is God; as if the imagination of his being man, were the firſt mean of believing him to be God. If the grand enemy that goes about ſeeking whom he may devour, had been plotting, ever ſince Chriſt's incarnation, to rub an affront upon him, he never fell upon a better method to deface the Deity of our Immanuel, than by uſing this ſtratagem of the abſolute neceſſity, in the firſt place, of having an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, without which they cannot believe that he is God or God-man. For, if the devil gets them once to begin their knowledge of Chriſt, with a ſtrong imagination about his *manhood*, he will endeavour to fix and fortify that imagination; which, according to the nature of things, cannot include, but neceſſarily excludes the believing conſideration of his *Godhead*. Thus, in a new way, never declared ſo barefacedly as now, the *god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The god of this world blinds the minds of men with imaginary ideas about the corporeal things of this world many ways; but by no way more dangerous and deceitful than this of repreſenting Chriſt, our glorious God-man Redeemer, the myſterious object of faith, as a corporeal object of ſenſe, made preſent to the fancy, under the figure, or by the image of a man, inſtead of beholding him as the image of God; or making this image of a man neceſſary to the beholding of him as the image of God. May the God who is light, ſend forth his light and his truth, and ſave all his people from ſuch groſs darkneſs, that tends to hide the glory of the goſpel from the eyes of men: For, *if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.*

Again, the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, being made by Mr. *Robe* the firſt thing needful to the right knowledge of

of Christ, and a necessary mean and help to it, is a plain inverting of God's method of teaching, and an overturning of the order of Christian doctrine and saving knowledge. What system of divinity can any man produce that ever made any part of divine Christian knowledge to begin with the imaginary idea of Christ as man? We have used our shorter catechism as a most compendious and excellent system, for the teaching of people the fundamental principles of religion; and it is remarkable there, that, as we are taught first the knowledge of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, and of our sinful miserable state, by our departure from him, before ever we hear of Christ; so, when Christ the Redeemer is described, he is set forth first in his person, under the name of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the eternal Son of God; who, being so, became *man*, and so was, and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever. This account begins and ends with the person of Christ; there is no word of an imaginary idea of Christ as man; far less any idea of his *manhood* being the first thing requisite to the knowledge of this glorious divine person, who, by an inconceivable mystery, assumed our human nature into his personality, who was from all eternity the second person of the glorious Trinity; and whose human nature never subsisted in any other person, and never existed, till assumed by him into that hypostatical union. Now, to make the imaginary idea of him as man the first thing necessary to the knowledge of this infinitely glorious person, the God-man, is, in my opinion, such a subversion of that due order and method of Christian knowledge, as makes that the beginning of it, which yet is neither the beginning nor the end. The *person* of Christ is, I may say, even in this sense, both the first and the last, the beginning and end of Christian knowledge. But the imaginary idea of him as man is neither; and cannot so much as help one to know that he is man, far less that he is God-man. Further,

How strange is the doctrine that necessarily imports that the object of faith is so divided, that one part of it is the object of any man's fancy, and another the object properly of faith; yea, that that which is the object of fancy, is properly the object of faith? Christ's humanity, simply as such, cannot be the object of faith, any other way than as it is either a revealed *truth* of God, or a *person*; or else it must be a *created thing* or matter. In the last sense, it cannot be the object of faith; otherwise a mere creature, a mere human body

body and soul, is a part of the object of faith; which is gross. The immediate object of faith is the word. Now, the human nature of Christ, abstractly viewed, cannot be the object of faith, otherwise than as it is a revealed truth, that he is man, and is clothed with our nature. And here it is not his humanity that is the object of faith properly, but the word declaring this truth. It is not his humanity as represented in our idea, that is the object of faith, but his humanity as it is revealed in the word; which is the glass wherein alone faith sees it. *Faith cometh by hearing* what God says, and so credits it, as a truth revealed in the word: But faith *cometh not by seeing* any form or figure of his humanity, represented to the fancy or imaginary idea. Faith believes it, as it is a truth revealed in the word, not as it is a thing formed in the fancy; which must be hurtful, but cannot be helpful to faith. It is true, we cannot believe that whereof we have no knowledge or conception. But then, this spiritual conception arises not from the imaginary idea, but from spiritual illumination, or light shining on the word, and by the word, into the understanding, which is the first thing God works upon.

Saving faith, no doubt, imports, among other things, a believing the truth of the fact, that Christ did really become man, assume our nature, and therein died and rose again in our room; and a believing this upon his own testimony, not merely upon the historical evidence of the thing, which is but an historical faith; but a believing it upon the divine testimony, which is a part of divine and saving faith, to which no natural idea of ours can contribute any help. That which is the object of that idea, cannot be the object of faith: Nor can that idea be the glass wherein I see any part of the object of faith; for God never gave it that honour, nor appointed it to be the mean of faith; it is no ordinance of God for helping us to faith. Take away the revelation of this truth, or the divine testimony about it, and you take away faith. There remains nothing indeed but an imaginary idea: For faith can have no footing but upon a *truth* to be believed, or a *person* to be believed in.

The proper and immediate object of faith is *verum*, a truth declared or made known. The Gospel hence is called a *record*, a *report*, a *saying*, a *faithful saying*. It is true, it contains a *good* also, worthy of all acceptation; and so *bonum* may be also reckoned the object of faith; but not so properly, unless it be considered as *bonum oblatum*, or a good offered and exhibited; and only as it is revealed in the

the word, is it the object of faith. The *summum bonum* itself, the chief good, which is God himself, cannot properly be the object of faith, but as he is revealed, or reveals himself. We believe his being and perfection upon his own testimony. Thus we cannot receive Christ, nor rest upon him for salvation, nor make him the object of our faith, but as he is revealed and offered in the gospel. Take away this revelation, this offer, this word of grace or promise, and then there can be no receiving or resting upon Christ by faith, but only by mere imagination, and unprofitable fancy. Now, if the proper object of faith be a *truth* in the word, how can the imaginary idea of Christ's humanity be helpful to it? while that idea necessarily changes the place of that humanity, from being *a truth in the word*, to a *fancy* or imagination *of it in the head*? For, as it is there, it can be no part of the object of faith. As it is a truth in the word, we, by faith, conceive of it believingly to be what it is. But, as it is represented in the fancy or imagination, it is neither a *truth* to be believed, nor *a person* to be believed in. (1.) It is not a truth to be believed; for now it is away *out of the word*, which is the object or ground of faith, and *into the head*, as the object of imagination; where faith hath no footing; nothing to build upon, but a *notion*, a *dream*. Nor, (2.) Is it *a person* to be believed in; being only an imaginary idea of his human nature, and not of his person. A truth to be believed, cannot ly in any man's fancy, but only in the word. A person to be believed in, cannot ly in the idea of Christ's human nature; which never was a *person*. How then can that be any part of the object of faith; which is neither a *truth* for faith to believe, nor a person for faith to be believed in, according to the word of God? To trust then to a Christ as formed in the imagination, and seen by the help of an imaginary idea, is not faith, but fancy, and a deep delusion.

In a word, an imaginary idea of Christ as man, or in his human nature, (which Mr. *Robe* so often repeats, and owns, cannot include the person of Christ,) can be helpful to no purpose in the world, far less to faith; no more than the grasping at a shadow can help to take hold of a substance. For human nature in the abstract, without being considered in a person, cannot be the object of any idea whatsoever; because it is a *nonentity*, a thing that has no being or existence, but in a person or persons. In any other person but Christ, human nature is the same with the person himself. But, the human nature of Christ not being his per-

ſon, an imaginary idea of it is an idea of it in the abſtract; which therefore is nothing but a ſhadow, an image, a nothing. Mr. *Robe* then, in attempting to find out hereſy and blaſphemy in my doctrine, has plunged himſelf more deeply into an horrible pit of abominable idolatry, where he is found worſhipping a ſhadow, as the object of his faith. He knew very well, that I made the human nature of Chriſt, when rightly underſtood, as ſubſiſting in the perſon of the Son of God, to be ſo much the object of faith, that I could not allow it to be the object of any imaginary idea, without defacing and debaſing it, and making it no more Chriſt's true humanity, but the vile picture of the leaſt part of it. It is no wonder that I cannot allow of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, however it obtrude itſelf, like a devil, upon my own imagination as well as Mr. *Robe*'s. For, as in divinity it is abſurd and monſtrous; ſo, in philoſophy, it is ſcarce agreeable with common ſenſe, even to ſpeak of an imaginary idea of a mere man, (as I have ſaid:) For, even according to Mr. *Robe* himſelf, it is impoſſible that a man as ſuch can be the object of an imaginary idea without an intellectual one; becauſe a man is not a mere body, but ſoul and body unite, conſtituting one perſon: Which relation and conjunction no philoſopher will allow that it can be conceived by any idea of mere ſenſation. But Mr. *Robe* will have, by his doctrine, the human nature of Chriſt to be the object of every or any man's imaginary idea, and yet as ſuch the object of faith alſo; yea, ſo eſſential to faith, as a help to it, that he that ventures to deny this, muſt be charged with blaſphemy, as if he denied the human nature of Chriſt to be the object of faith in any other reſpect; becauſe he denies it to be the object of his imaginary idea. Such a mixture of impudence and ignorance can hardly be paralleled. But I deſire to ſpeak ſoberly; for what abſurdities will not poor men run themſelves into, when God leaves them to themſelves, and gives them up to *ſtrong delusions*? ſo ſtrong ſometimes, that thoſe who are under the power of them, will charge them all likewiſe with blaſphemy that venture to call them ſo.

CHAP. V.

I Propoſed, in the *fifth* place, to offer particular remarks upon all the parts of Mr. *Robe*'s letter relating to this ſubject, and in ſo far as he impugns the doctrine delivered in the above *Appendix*, and charges it with *hereſy* and *blaſphemy*.

Becauſe

Because this chapter is long, I shall divide it into different sections.

SECT. I.

SOME philosophers and divines have not so accurately distinguished between imagination and understanding as was needful †. Mr. *Robe*, in his letter, plainly distinguishes them; *p.* 8. 10. and elsewhere; and yet as plainly confounds them. Almost in every page he makes his imagination or imaginary idea to have no other object but corporeal; and yet he makes the most spiritual things to be the objects of fancy and imagination, by citing philosophers and divines, that either have been of *Gassendus*'s mind, or at least have not accurately considered the difference between imagination and understanding. And hence his citations do him little service, unless it be to confirm him in his confusion, wherein he makes faith and fancy so very sib, as to be one and the same thing. Hence he brings in the learned *Charnock*, *p.* 20. when speaking of the elements in the Lords supper, saying, *Here we may see the sufferings of his body*, &c. *Here fancy may work about the inconceivable troubles of his soul*, &c. It is scarcely to be thought, that Mr. *Robe* and that author agree in their notion about the meaning of the word *fancy*; otherwise he exposes that learned man by citing him in this manner. Why, Mr. *Robe* seems to make an imaginary idea and fancy to be the same thing, as indeed they are; and he is of the mind, that the imaginary idea cannot work upon spiritual and inconceivable things, whatever help or assistance he thinks the imagination can give to the understanding to do so, *p.* 24. yet these, he says, are not the object about which the imagination can be conversant; neither can it receive any species of them: And yet here he brings in the fancy working about the *inconceivable troubles of Christ's soul*, which

† *Imagination*, according to the learned, is thus defined, namely, *An application of the mind to the phantasm or image of some corporeal thing impressed in the brain.* Or, it is *a power or faculty of the soul, by which it conceives and forms ideas of things by means of certain traces and impressions that had been before made on the brain by sensation.* What we call *fancy*, they define by *imagination*, as being one and the same thing. The learned *Charnock* makes both *sense and fancy corporeal faculties*, vol. 1. p. 125. as cited in Mr. *Robe*'s letter, *p.* 8. Again, *Understanding* is thus defined, namely, *A faculty of the reasonable soul conversant about intelligible things, considered as intelligible.* Some philosophers seem to disapprove the distinction betwixt *imagination* and *understanding*; as the followers of *Epicurus*, such as *Gassendus*, *dubit. & instant. in Cart. medit.* 3. p. 181. *Dicito quid aliud intellectio quàm idea perceptio sit? Quid aliud imaginatio quàm perceptio imaginis? Et, cùm idea sit imago, quid aliud sit intellectio quàm imaginatio?* and others.

can only be seen and apprehended by faith; and so seems to identify and confound faith and fancy: For there is more here than the fancy of things corporeal, helping, as he elsewhere alledges, to the faith of things spiritual; for here is the fancy of things that are most spiritual and inconceivable, which only the faith of believers, when discerning the Lord's body, can apprehend. Mr. *Robe* should here have distinguished between things imaginable by a sensitive idea, where imagination imports inward sensation of corporeal things, and things imaginable by an intellectual idea, where imagination imports reflexion and rational understanding of things incorporeal, or as intelligible. But this is not properly or ordinarily called imagination; because it agrees not with the nature of it, as above defined ‡. Sure, fancy and imagination, in Mr. *Robe*'s sense, cannot be conversant about things inconceivable; since he plainly distinguishes his imaginary idea from an act of the understanding, in his letter, *p.* 31. 54. *&c.* and makes the object thereof only things corporeal. I know not indeed whether Mr. *Robe* hath a tincture of *Ubiquitarian* principles, whereby he can conceive of Christ's human body as present, as well as absent, in the sacramental supper, or otherwise. But one would think his words import as much, when he says, *p.* 29. *We can and often do think upon him, or have an imaginary idea of him, as man, without thinking of him as present, or under that consideration.* But, if any think of Christ's human nature with spiritual understanding, surely, while they view it *spiritually* in the word, *symbolically* in the sacrament, *representatively* both in word and sacrament, and *personally* in the λογὸς, *the Word that was made flesh*, they cannot but consider it now to be *locally* in heaven; though they consider him that is clothed with it, to be *essentially* every where. But, to conceive of Christ's human nature, or human body, as Mr. *Robe* speaks, without the consideration of its absence, seems either to favour some *Ubiquitarian* maxim, or else some delusive imagination or fancy of Christ as bodily present.

Besides what notice I took before of Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine and

‡ Some philosophers speak of fancies, and distinguish them into *sensible*, being received by the senses; and others *not sensible*, as these of incorporeal things. Some, say they, are *rational*, (called *intelligence*), as being peculiar to reasonable creatures; others *irrational*, as in brutes. (Hence may some of Mr. *Robe*'s authorities be such as understand fancy and imagination in a quite other sense than he). They distinguish also between fancies *involuntarily*, that strike the mind of a sudden with violence, as by some terrifying news that disturb the mind; and *voluntarily*, by which a wise man examines these, and strips them of their terrifying qualities. *Lives of philosophers, p.* (*mihi*) 288.

and principles delivered, *p.* 30 and 31 of his letter, there are some further remarks I would offer.

To say, that we cannot believe in Christ the God-man without an imaginary idea of him as man, what, alas! does this mighty phrase so oft repeated come to, when it is considered that the imaginary idea, according even to Mr. *Robe*, can go no further than the outward corporeal form, or the outside of the human body? It is natural for all men, as long as they are in the body, whenever a man is spoke of, to have an image or form of a human body in their brain. But, alas! why should this idea be spoken of with relation to the actings of precious faith on the Son of God? For this imaginary idea may be applied to any thing in all the world, near or distant, absent or present, that is a subject of discourse; if it be a corporeal thing, the same imaginary idea will be received or formed in the brain about it. None can hear tell of a house, and listen to the report, without an imaginary idea of a house; nor hear and listen to any thing said of a bird in the air, or a fish in the sea, or a horse, dog, or any other creature on earth, without an imaginary idea forming the shapes or images of these creatures in the brain, as fast as they can be told us. This is a sensitive power and faculty given us, whereby we are able to understand the meaning of *words*, or what sort of bodily things these words represent to our fancy. This is a power of sensation, whereof many inferior creatures of the brutal kind do largely partake, as well as mankind; so as to have images of outward things in their imagination, by the means of their outward senses of seeing, hearing, or the like; and that even to greater perfection than in men, according to that known verse:

Nos aper auditu, *lynx* visu, *simia* gustu,
Vultur odoratu *nos vincit*, *aranea* tactu.

Which may be thus *Englished:*

The wild boar's ear, *the lynx's* eye, *the ravenous vulture's* smell,
The ape's fine taste, *the spider's* touch, *our senses all excel.*

But now, to apply this to such a spiritual subject as that of believing in the person of Christ, the glorious Immanuel, is unaccountably absurd. Why, says Mr. *Robe*, *p.* 30. *I asserted, and do assert, That we cannot think upon Christ really as he is, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever, without an imaginary idea of him as man, or in his human nature, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul.* Where, besides his making Christ's reasonable soul the object of his imaginary idea, though he asserted, that no spiritual thing,

and

and nothing but what is corporeal, could possibly be the object of it; besides this gross absurdity and self-contradiction, let me suppose he means only the imaginary idea of Christ's human body; and he can mean no other thing, if he be any way agreeable with himself; for an intellectual as well as an imaginary idea must concur in thinking upon a reasonable soul, as well as a true body: But let me suppose, I say, that he means this, namely, an imaginary idea of Christ's human body, when he speaks of the imaginary idea of him as man. Why then, the amount of it is this, that, seeing the sensitive faculty of forming ideas of all corporeal things spoken of, is natural to all men, while they have bodies unite to their souls, therefore no man can think of, or really believe in Christ as he is God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever, without having a body with some or all of the five senses, and a brain capable to form the image of a man or a human body, and without actually exerting this capacity and power of sensation and imagination, for forming the image of a man in the brain. This is the whole import of the matter: And yet this, says Mr. *Robe*, though he will not call it faith, yet it is absolutely necessary and greatly helpful to it. I own, such carnal, foolish and vain stuff to me appears a scandal to the rational world, a disgrace to the glorious gospel, a discredit to our holy religion, and a masterpiece of contradiction to solid divinity.

This imaginary idea of Christ as man, while Mr. *Robe* says he does not call it faith, meaning, I suppose, the act of faith; yet he must mean, that the object of that idea, *viz.* Christ's human body, is the object of faith, or at least a *part* of the *real* and proper object of it; otherwise his alledging it blasphemy to deny it to be the object of faith, would have had no foundation at all. But now it is self-evident to any considerate man, that the human nature of Christ belongs not *really*, but only *relatively*, to the object of faith; even as there is no *real* change of the person of Christ by his assuming our nature, though there is a *relative* change. Thus there is no change of the object of faith from the divine person of Christ to some other thing, as if now the human nature belonged *really* to, or were the proper object of faith; which indeed is blasphemy to imagine, as supposing a *real* change in God, who alone is the object of faith. If faith's object should relate to something that is corporeal; yet neither philosophy nor divinity will admit, that it can be the object of faith as it is corporeal; but under some other consideration, namely, as that corporeal thing is held forth in some truth, assertion

sertion or testimony about it, or under some credible and intelligible, or spiritual and invisible consideration. Of which more afterwards. Truth to be believed, is a spiritual and invisible thing, whatever be the subject-matter. I shall suppose, *e. g.* it is the rock in the wilderness is the subject: This, as it is a material or corporeal thing, cannot be the object of faith, but only of sense and imagination; but let it be spoke of under a word of truth or testimony, such as that, 1 *Cor.* x. 4. *They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* Here is an object of faith. But then it is not the rock as it is the object of an imaginary idea, that is the object of faith, but the testimony relating to that rock. Thus the human body of Christ is not at all the object of faith in itself, or under that consideration, but only the object of sense or fancy: But let a word or testimony relating to it be held forth, such as for example, *That his human body was broken for us*; this truth relating to that broken body, is the object of faith; but the broken body itself, as viewed by an imaginary idea, is an object of sense, and can in no propriety of speech be called the object of faith: For here sense and imagination hath something to see or form an image of. But take away the truth relating to it, and faith hath nothing to believe at all; there is food for fancy, but none for faith.

But, though Mr. *Robe*, throughout his letter, would fain confound his imaginary idea with knowledge, as if to know Christ to be man, were the same with an imaginary idea, he will find himself mistaken; for I shall prove they are quite different things. The imaginary idea belongs to the *sensitive* faculty, having for its object, according to Mr. *Robe* himself, only corporeal things: But knowledge belongs to the *intellectual* faculty, that is capable of being conversant about spiritual things, such as God, and other spirits and truths; which no imaginary idea is capable of. For example, let this be the truth I instance, namely, *That Christ hath a true body; that he is really man.* This truth is an object of knowledge and faith: But it is not the object of an imaginary idea; for truth, as I said above, hath no body, no corporeal parts, nothing visible or sensible for an imaginary idea to fix upon. None can draw an image of it in his brain; for it is a spiritual thing, a part of the image of the invisible God, a ray of light from him that dwells in light inaccessible, to which no man can approach. Truth is a perfection of God; Christ is truth itself, and all the lines of particular truths revealed in scripture, meet in him as the centre of truth: And, whether they be known and believed in a saving or common way; yet

none

none of them as truths can be apprehended by any imaginary idea; becauſe truth is no corporeal thing. But now the imaginary idea of a body cannot at all help me to believe this truth, That *Chriſt had a body prepared for him,* Heb. x. 5. or that he hath a true body. The imaginary idea of it is but the image of a body, that hath no true or real exiſtence, but only in the fancy or in the brain; where it, being no true body, but an imaginary one, can never help or aſſiſt me in the belief of this truth, That *Chriſt hath a true body.* But, by ſpiritual knowledge and ſaving faith, we ſee Chriſt hath a true body. Where do we ſee it? *Anſwer* (1.) We ſee it where we ſee truth; that is, in the *word of God,* upon whoſe teſtimony we know and believe it, *Jer.* ii. 31. *O generation, ſee ye the word of the Lord.* Thus we ſee it where no imaginary idea can approach to it. But faith ſees it here as a precious truth, and ſometimes feels the ſweet ſmell of it, as one of the leaves of the *Roſe of Sharon,* which an imaginary idea can no more do, than a man can draw the picture of the ſweet ſmell of a roſe. *Qui pingit florem, non pingit floris odorem.* The picture of a roſe is no more a true roſe, than the picture of the human body of Chriſt formed by an imaginary idea, is a true body. But, as faith ſees it where it ſees truth, ſo, (2.) It ſees it where it exiſts, that is, in the perſon of our Immanuel God-man; where alſo no imaginary idea can come near to ſee, but is infinitely remote from it. And indeed, if the human body of Chriſt ſeem to be ſeen any where elſe, than in the perſon of the Son of God, where it only exiſts, then it cannot be the true body of Chriſt that is ſeen, but a mere nonentity, a mere ſhadow. It is not conſiſtent with common ſenſe to ſuppoſe it can be ſeen where it is not, or ſeen where it never exiſted. Thus we know *the truth as it is in Jeſus*; and particularly we know and believe this truth, *That he hath a true body,* when we ſee it where we ſee *truth,* and when we ſee it where it *exiſts:* We ſee it *as the truth is in Jeſus, Eph.* iv. 21. If therefore, when a believer hath his mind occupied about the knowledge and faith of this truth, *That Chriſt hath a true body,* an imaginary idea of that body ſhould obtrude itſelf, and form an image of that body in his brain, and ſo ſhewing it, where it really is not, and where it does not exiſt, nor cannot be ſeen; he ought to deal with that imaginary idea as *Abraham* did, *Gen.* xv. 11. *When the fowls came down upon the carcaſes, he drove them away:* So ought believers to drive ſuch vain imaginations away, as they would do the devil himſelf tempting them, and diverting their mind from the faith of that truth, to an idle fancy about a human body. If he cannot

not rid himself of it so long as vain thoughts lodge within him, yet he ought daily to pray and plead with God, that he may be delivered from it; otherwise he cannot *attend upon the Lord without distraction*, 1 Cor. vii. 35. And indeed I am bold to say, that, to preach up an imaginary idea of Christ as man, and assert it to be necessary and helpful to saving faith, is to preach up the necessity of distraction and delusion, the necessity of mental idolatry and imagery. Whereas nothing is more necessary and helpful to spiritual knowledge and saving faith, than to have all such imaginary ideas banished and buried out of sight, that faith may act like itself, not by the means of natural and carnal sensation, but by the means of spiritual illumination; or by *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, his shining into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.*

To have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, however common to fleshly nature, is not at all a thinking upon Christ; for Christ as man, in Mr *Robe*'s sense, is not Christ at all, but a mere nothing. Some may think strange of this way of speaking; but I shall make it clear. Christ as man is not Christ at all; for as man, or in his human nature, he is not the subject wherein that manhood doth subsist. Again, Christ as man is not Christ, for as man he is not a person; but Christ is a *person:* As man he is not God; but Christ is *God:* As man he is not the *eternal Son of God*; but Christ is the *eternal* Son of God. To have an imaginary idea of the *true* Christ, is impossible; because Christ is God and man in one person. Therefore, to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is easy to any man, but unprofitable. Whereas to think upon Christ believingly, is the most profitable thought. *That Christ is man*, is the object of faith: But *Christ as man* (in Mr. *Robe*'s sense) is not so; for, according to the import of the particle *as* in our language, it serves for the limitation and restriction of the subject spoken of, so as to confine it to the sense only of some property or predicate ascribed to it. Thus, when we speak of Christ as man, we restrict and confine the meaning of the word *Christ*, which signifies a person, to the meaning of the *word man*, which signifies only the human nature, and not the person: And thus, the word *man* signifying only what we commonly understand by that word, it may be the object of any man's imaginary idea; but can never be the object of faith, as long as man does not signify God. To think then of Christ as he is the Christ of God, is to think of that person who is both God

and man, the only Saviour and Redeemer. But to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is to confine the thought only to corporeal manhood, or to set up the image or picture only of a man in the head or brain; which is no more Christ than any other man is, as Mr. *Robe*'s way of arguing proves. Yea, it hath less resemblance to Christ, than the fancy we have of another man, whom we can truly think of as a person. But, when the idea of Christ as man represents to us a person, it represents a lie and a falshood; because, as I said, Christ as man is no person.

Sect. II.

Mr. *Robe* says, p. 31. "When we think upon the Lord Jesus "Christ, as he is God and man in two distinct natures, we "must conceive of him to be true and real man; and this "is what is called an *imaginary idea of him.*" I suppose it were easy to shew how this expression proves the author of it to be quite ignorant of what he is saying, and neither to understand the philosophical terms in which he speaks, nor the point of divinity of which he speaks.

(1.) As to the philosophical term of idea, and imaginary idea, it is plain he cannot understand this: For, though he asserts elsewhere, that the imaginary idea can respect no other but corporeal things, yet here he makes it to respect two spiritual and incorporeal things, as its objects. The one is the human nature of Christ, as true and real man: which he will own includes the human soul, as the chief part of his human nature: Yet this, as well as Christ's human body, is here (in his way of wording the matter) supposed evidently to be the object of an imaginary idea. The other is the divine person of Christ, the God-man; for he speaks of the *imaginary idea of him:* Which *him* is not common sense, if it does not signify a person. For, had he meant only Christ's human nature, the proper language of one that understood what he said, would have been to speak of the imaginary idea of *it*, which *it* would have shewed, that it was not a person, but a nature that was spoken of. But, to speak of an imaginary idea of *him*, is unintelligible, unless he be speaking of a person: And, if he be speaking of a person, it is the person of Christ, who is God-man in one person. And, to apply an imaginary idea to that infinitely glorious object, which comprehends both a finite and an infinite Spirit, and yet that idea, even according to Mr. *Robe*, can have nothing for its object but what is corporeal or bodily; here is strange philosophy; and such a confounding of imaginary

and

and intellectual ideas, even where he seems to red marches between them, as it is hard to think that a man who speaks in this manner, could really understand what he was saying, or take up the meaning of his own words, and be any way consistent with himself.

(2.) As to the point of divinity of which he speaks, it seems impossible that he can understand it; for he speaks of conceiving Christ to be true and real man; and then adds, *This is what is called* (and I suppose never by any but himself that I know of) *an imaginary idea of* him. Here is strange divinity, a confounding of things every way distinct. For, (1.) To conceive of Christ, is to conceive of a *person* God-man; and this person is inconceivable by an imaginary idea. (2.) To conceive of this person that he is true and real man, is to conceive a *truth* relating to that person, a truth testified in the word of God. This truth is not the object of an imaginary idea; for a truth is no corporeal object, but only the object of faith. Therefore, (3.) To say of this conception of this person, that it is the imaginary idea of him, is a very gross absurdity both in divinity and philosophy. For neither the person nor the truth is the object of a corporeal idea, but only the human body of Christ abstractly considered, as to its outward form. For even the intrinsical nature of a body is not the object of an imaginary idea. We can form no idea of what we do not or cannot see, nor have objected to our natural sense. It is true, Mr. *Robe* seems, by the two following particulars, to make Christ's being God, and then his being God-man, the object of some other than an imaginary idea, that is, of some intellectual idea; whereas yet no merely natural intellectual idea can possibly conceive of this great mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*. But, whereas he says, in the first particular here, that, to conceive of Christ's being true and real man, is to have an imaginary idea of *him*, it seems easy to prove from this, that this particular includes both the latter; that is, that his imaginary idea of *him*, and conceiving *him* to be true and real man, imports all that he says of conceiving him to be God and God-man: And consequently he makes all these the object of an imaginary idea, however absurd and impossible it is that it can be so.

For clearing this further, I would ask Mr. *Robe*, if he can form the idea of a true and real man, without forming the idea of a person or a subject that is said to be that true and real man? or if he can form the idea of a human nature, without forming the idea of a human person as the subject of

that humanity? If this be impoſſible, then it is equally impoſſible to form an idea of the human nature of Chriſt, without forming the idea of a human perſon in him. But, to conceive of Chriſt, as if his human nature were a human perſon, is an erroneous and blaſphemous notion of Chriſt, and contrary both to ſcripture, and all ſound divines that ever wrote upon that ſubject. If it be ſaid, that he meant only the human nature of Chriſt as it is the object of an imaginary idea, becauſe part of it is corporeal; and that his divine perſon, which is God-man, is not the object of any corporeal idea; if ſo, then how can it be ſaid with truth, that the conceiving of Chriſt to be true and real man, is an imaginary idea of *him?* For Chriſt, being true and real man, by which he underſtands his human nature, is neither a *he*, nor a *him*, nor a *perſon*, but an *it*; that is, a human nature that has no *ſubject* to which it is unite, no *perſon* by whom it can be denominate, but the perſon of the Son of God; which cannot be the object of an imaginary idea, but only of faith. The human nature of this glorious perſon is an inconcivable myſtery: *Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh.*

Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea, which can only reſpect corporeal things, muſt neceſſarily either attribute perſonality to the human nature of Chriſt, or humanity to the divine nature: Both which are abſurd and blaſphemous. It aſcribes perſonality to the human nature, becauſe it cannot conceive of a human nature without a human perſon or ſubject. It aſcribes humanity to the divine nature, becauſe it cannot conceive of a divine perſon as the ſubject (or *ſuppoſitum*) of this humanity, without putting a human form upon it, or making ſome corporeal picture of it in the brain. Both which are abſurd, blaſphemous and idolatrous.

Mr. *Robe* goes on (*p.* 31, 32.) to confound his imaginary idea with knowledge; as if theſe were the ſame, and had the ſame objects; whereas I have ſhewn, that the object of that idea is only corporeal things, as corporeal: But the object of rational knowledge is not only corporeal things, but ſpiritual; and corporeal things, not as corporeal, but as intelligible. It is ſure, as he ſays, *that we cannot believe without knowledge.* But may we not have a rational, intellectual and ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, without confounding this with the ſenſitive knowledge and imaginary idea of a human body? If we cannot know him ſpiritually without knowing him carnally; yet is it not the part that rational believing ſouls ought to act, even rationally and believingly to diſtinguiſh between a ſpiritual and carnal act, and to ſeparate the one from the other;

yea,

yea, to fly from the carnal conception and mere sensitive idea, as they would fly from the devil? Mr. *Robe*'s adducing Mr. *Durham* here to shew there must be knowledge in order to faith, is quite out of purpose; unless Mr. *Durham* had made an imaginary idea a part of that knowledge; which he will neither find him nor any man of knowledge do.

Mr. *Robe*, *p.* 32. has these following words: "What Mr. "*Ralph Erskine* and you (meaning Mr. *Fisher*) must assert, "seeing you contradict these positions, is, That we can think "upon Christ as God-man, without an imaginary idea of him "as man, or in his human nature, consisting of a true bo- "dy and a reasonable soul. 2*dly*, That we can receive the "Lord Jesus Christ offered unto us as God-man in the gospel, "without an idea or thought of him as man; and that we "ought never to think upon him as man, or have any idea "or conception of him in his human nature."

For clearing this matter, I remark, (1.) When Mr. *Robe* says, that we cannot think of Christ or believe in him as God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, but cannot say, we must have an imaginary idea of him as God-man; then he must mean, that the God-man is the object of faith, but Christ as man is the object of fancy and imagination: And so comes to own almost as much as Mr. *Erskine* did, that his manhood, or human body, properly is not, as such, the object of faith, but of sense and fancy; even though he would fain make it error and blasphemy in Mr. *Erskine* to say so. For, if Christ as man be considered as the object of faith the same way as Christ as God is the object of it, why may not the faith of the God-man be understood, without the fancy terminating on the man, or rather on the image or vile picture of his human body in the brain?

(2.) If to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man (according to Mr. *Robe*'s explication of it from Mr. *Durham*) be only meant of understanding or conceiving in the judgment, *that he is man*, otherwise they cannot believe; then the whole amount of his arguing for that imaginary idea is this, That none can believe in Christ as Godman without knowing that he is God, and knowing that he is man. And who that hath common sense, will deny this, as Mr. *Durham* says it? But Mr. *Robe*'s *imaginary idea of Christ as man*, and Mr. *Durham*'s proposition of this truth, *That Christ must be known to be man*, are vastly different things. *That Christ is man*, is a truth to be known and believed, and a proper object of faith, as it is revealed in the word. But the imaginary idea of Christ as man, or of his natural human body as such, is a picture or image

of

of Christ's body in the brain; and is no more the object of faith, than any other corporeal thing represented to the fancy in a corporeal idea. To know the man Christ, is one thing, and is consistent enough with the faith of the person God-man: But, to have an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is another thing, and quite extraneous from faith, and no ways allied to it. Though it should attend and accompany faith, it does not accompany it as a help, but a hinderance; nor as a friend, but a foe: For faith leads to the man Christ in the word and revelation; but this idea leads to a Christ in the fancy and imagination.

(3.) If Mr. *Robe*'s assertion on this head were reduced to an argument formally, it might be to this purpose: *The faith of Christ's manhood imports the knowledge of Christ's being man: But the knowledge of Christ's being man cannot be without an imaginary idea of him as man; therefore there can be no faith of Christ's manhood, without an imaginary idea of him as man.* The *major* I allow. But the *minor* proposition, That the knowledge of Christ being man cannot be without the imaginary idea of him as man, I deny, in so far as it makes a confusion of two ideas that are distinct in their nature and object. They are distinct in their *nature*; for the *imaginary* idea of Christ *as man*, is a sensitive and corporeal idea; but the *knowledge* of Christ's *being man*, is what imports an intellectual idea, and belongs to the understanding. They differ also in their *object*: The object of an imaginary idea is only Christ's human *body*; but the object of that intellectual idea, that accompanies the knowledge of Christ's *being man*, is the *truth* or revelation relating to his manhood. But, to say none can have the intellectual idea, without having the imaginary, or that the image of Christ in the brain is helpful to the knowledge of Christ in the understanding, and the one is necessary to the other, is childish and foolish, as I have already shewn, and unworthy of the pen and pains either of a philosopher, or a divine: For the more spiritually we are exercised, and the more free we are from these sensitive and corporeal ideas, the better, and more conform to God.

(4.) While a believer hath a body and a soul unite, he hath both a sensitive and intellectual faculty, as well as faith. *Sense* views objects of sense and corporeal things, or *sensibilia*, as such. The *intellect* views intelligible things, or *intelligibilia*, as such. *Faith*, belonging to the intellect, as it views truth, or credible things, hath for its object *credibilia* or *credenda*. The object of sense cannot, as such, be the object of faith: For, to say that faith hath a corporeal object, is to speak nonsense,

sense, inconsistent both with philosophy and divinity. Neither reason nor religion can admit of such an absurdity; which yet is involved in a thousand expressions Mr. *Robe* hath about imaginary ideas of corporeal objects, confounding these with the object of faith.

While soul and body are together, though the soul cannot act without the body; yet how do we abuse the reason that God hath given us, if we cannot distinguish between the acts of the body as such, and the acts of the soul, but confound the animal life of the brute, with the rational life of the man? Even so, though faith be in a subject that hath a body with corporeal sensation, as well as a soul with rational reflexion, how is faith abused, if it cannot distinguish between objects of natural knowledge, such as brute beasts have of outward bodily things, *Jude, vers.* 10. and objects of rational knowledge, such as men ought to have of intelligible things? and much more, if it cannot distinguish between *objects of sense*, that are things outwardly *visible*, or even inwardly *imaginable* by an imaginary idea; and *objects of faith*, which respect things only as they are *credible* or *credenda*, that may or ought to be believed? Not to distinguish here, is to confound faith with sense, and to blend things carnally sensible, with things spiritually intelligible, flesh and spirit, earth and hell together.

(5.) Mr. *Robe* here supposes, there can be no knowledge, *that Christ is man*, without the imaginary idea of him as man. But God, and angels, and souls departed know Christ to be man, and yet without any corporeal faculties such as that of an imaginary idea. And, though the soul united to the body, hath sense still acting at the same time that reason, judgment and understanding acts, and so it may be supposed there is still the act of the sensitive faculty; yet, why should he deny the power of the intellectual faculties, as if they were not able to know that Christ is man, without having his corporeal image in the brain? Rational knowledge belongs properly to the soul; but imaginary ideas belong more to the body. Hence the bodies even of men can act, as it were, without the agency, though not without the presence of the rational soul, as when they eat and drink to excess, like brute beasts, or worse: And may we not suppose, that the rational souls of men can act sometimes without the agency, though not without the presence of the body, and its senses and imagination forming outward and inward shapes and images of corporeal things? Which, when they obtrude themselves, reason itself must instantly avoid, ere it can have a right notion of any truth

truth relating to these corporeal things; and much more will faith shake off any such vermin, when it is found creeping into the heart. For, as no corporeal object can be the object of rational understanding, but under some intelligible consideration; so neither can it be the object of faith, but under some divine or spiritual consideration.

(6.) Mr. *Robe* here supposing Mr. *Erskine* excludes the human nature of Christ from being any part of the object of faith, it is to be remarked, that he indeed excludes the fancy of Christ's human body, or the imaginary idea of it, from being any part thereof, or having any share therein. It is no part of the object of faith as *justifying*; for that is Christ as a *Priest, the Lord our righteousness.* It is no part of the object of faith as it is *sanctifying*; for that is Christ as a *King*, and in his Spirit and grace, and as he is the Lord our strength. It is no part of it as it is *saving* faith; for that is Christ in *all his offices.* It is no part of faith as it is *God-glorying*, any more than as it is a soul-saving faith; for God is not glorified by any man's fancy or imaginary idea of Christ's human body, but by the faith of his humanity, as unite to his divinity in one person. We are not to confound either the *act* of faith with the *act* of fancy, or the *object* of faith with the *object* of fancy.

From all which it follows as too true what Mr. *Fisher* said, "That to assert, that we cannot receive Christ as offered in "the Gospel without an imaginary idea of him as man, hath a "native tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the "word to a false Christ upon the imagination." This inference Mr. *Robe* complains of, and then adds, *p.* 33. "Mr. *Ralph* "*Erskine* doth, in the expressest terms, exclude the human "nature of the glorious Mediator God-man from being any "part of the object of faith." (And it is well he cites for "it my words following:) *Can that be any part of the object* "*of faith which is perceptible by every man's fancy, and is* "*obvious to natural discerning.* And argueth (says Mr. *Robe*) "all alongst against all conceptions of Christ as man, or "in his human nature, as *carnal, vain*, and *unprofitable*, "yea, *hurtful and hindering to faith.* And again, *To con-* "*ceive of him as man, and yet, at the same time, to con-* "*ceive and receive him as God-man, are still contradictions.*" —Besides what I have said in answer to this elsewhere, I would remark, that Mr. *Robe* goes on here to confound faith and fancy, by making that the object of faith which is the object of every man's fancy; as if the gross, carnal, and sensitive imagination about a natural body which every man may have

have in his head, were any part of that spiritual consideration and believing contemplation of Christ's human nature subsisting in his divine person. This necessarily includes the believing apprehension and faith of his human nature thus subsisting; but the other diverts the mind from an object of faith, to an object of sense; from the true Christ without us in the word, to a false Christ within us on the fancy; from a whole Christ, to a half, yea, to that which is not the half of that half, but a mere bodily object: And so must be a sinful conception, and unbelief, instead of faith. Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea or fancy, according to his own concession, can see only a mere man at the utmost, because the object of it is corporeal. And, when that is reckoned a seeing any part of Christ, it is but a chimera, a fancy indeed, a seeing of a thing that never was: For, as Christ was never a mere man, so a mere man was never any part of the object of faith. Mr. *Robe* indeed may say, that he never alledged a mere man was any part of the object of faith. If so, then why does he alledge, that that mere manhood, which only can be the object of his imaginary idea, is any part of the object of faith? Nay, but he may alledge, he only made that imaginary idea helpful and necessary to the discerning of the object of faith. But how he can think the fancy and imagination of a mere man can be helpful to the knowledge of a God-man, is strange. When faith comes by hearing, it takes up Christ to be what he is. But, if fancies and imaginary ideas come by hearing, Christ is not thereby formed in the heart really, but only in the head notionally. Indeed fancy can see and apprehend all that Mr. *Robe* speaks of, as the object of an imaginary idea: But the object of faith cannot be seen, and is such as fancy cannot reach; for it is seen only by spiritual illumination, and a *faith of divine operation*, through the *revelation of Christ in us*, Gal. i. 16.

SECT. III.

MR. *Robe* says, *p.* 33. "That, accurately speaking, an imaginary idea is that idea which the understanding forms of "corporeal things absent from us, by the help of the imagination, presenting the species or image of these corporeal "things received and laid up in the imagination: For, as it "is not our senses that apprehend corporeal things present, "but our souls, by the intervention of our senses; so it is not "the imagination that hath what we call the idea of any "corporeal object absent, but the soul and understanding, "by the intervention of the imagination; according to that

" rule, *Oportet intelligentem phantaſmata ſpeculari.*" Here ſeems to be a very learned philoſophical diſcourſe. But, before I offer remarks upon it, I muſt compare it with two other paſſages in Mr. *Robe*'s book: One is, *p.* 26. Where he ſays, " The repreſentation of theſe ſenſible objects is not ſen-" ſible: For, though the ſpecies in the imagination are cor-" poreal or material; yet they are ſo ſubtile that they can " never affect any of the ſenſes; nor is it deſigned they ſhould; " they can only be perceived by the underſtanding." And, *p.* 62, 63. where he ſays, " Mr. *Erskine* ſhould have proven, " that our ſenſes and imagination, inſtead of being greatly " helpful to us, do greatly hinder us to think upon the nature " and perfections of God. But this is what he hath not done, " and ſhall never be able to do, unleſs he can prove, that " the natural eſſential powers God hath given to us as men, " are not helpful to us; but we would know God much bet-" ter if we wanted them: That is to ſay, a man would at-" tain the knowledge of God's nature and perfections, by the " viſible things of the creation, much better, he were blind, " deaf, without feeling and other ſenſes, and without the fa-" culty of the imagination." On this laſt paſſage I ſhall offer remarks when I come forward to it. But at preſent, comparing it with the preceeding paſſages, I remark, (1.) That what Mr. *Robe* here ſays, puts me in mind of the *Epicurean* philoſophy; in which it is ſaid, " Senſe is a motion of the " ſoul, depending upon the body; that the principle of ſen-" ſation is lodged in the ſoul, yet the body perceives and feels " along with it, *&c.* The eye, for inſtance, ſees in conjuncti-" on with the ſoul; for, if they were only doors for the ſoul " to ſee through, (as ſome will have it,) we might ſee things " better if our eyes were out †." Then the account *Epicurus* gives of the intellect, or rational part, " its property is to " think, apprehend, and reaſon, when the ſenſe ſtrikes it. " It conſiſts of the moſt ſubtile, ſmooth and round bodies, " than which nothing can be ſwifter. Whence it is, that it " thinks and performs its office with an unimaginable cele-" rity, *&c.* As the eye ſees by the influx of images, ſo is the in-" tellect determined to think by the ſame influence; only the " little images are much ſubtiler than thoſe that affect the eye, " as being qualified to penetrate through the body, and adapt-" ed to the contexture of the intellect." One would think, that, when Mr. *Robe* makes ſo great ado with ſenſes and images or imaginary ideas, he had got ſome ſmack of this philoſophy of *Epicurus*. But that of old *Ariſtotle* ſeems to be more agree-

† Lives of ancient philoſophers, *p.* (*mihi*) 464. 467.

agreeable to Christianity, "That the soul is immaterial and "immortal; that it does not consist of elements; for then "it would understand nothing more than the elements themselves: That the intellectual faculty of the soul is peculiar to man, being that whereby we know and understand: "That the intellect is either passive, which receives the species from intellectual objects; or active, which is the cognoscitive power enlightening phantasms, and the passive intellect: That the former is mortal, which is the cause of forgetfulness, the other separable from the body, void of passion, immortal and eternal. Again, that the understanding or intellect is either theoretick, the object of which is truth and falshood, or practick, the object of which is good and evil: † That the acts of the intellect are either simple apprehension; or complex, uniting things, by affirmation or negation. The latter are always either true or false; the former are neither." Where, by the by, we may learn, that what Mr. *Robe* calls the object of faith, namely, Christ as man, or in his human nature, is, as he expresses it, neither the object of faith nor of unbelief, being at most a simple apprehension; and, consequently, according to the rules of philosophy, neither a truth nor a falshood. Unless something is supposed to be affirmed or denied concerning this manhood or humanity of Christ, then it is either true or false; and so can be the object of faith, or a thing to be believed, or not.

(2.) According to this philosophy, whereby he seems so much to confound the sensitive with the intellectual power, and the animal with the rational life, without redding marches, he may ascribe rational understanding to a spaniel dog, seeking after, and howling for his absent master. And how much this doctrine may tend to strengthen the hands of *Epicures* and *Atheists*, in supposing that men have no other soul or understanding than a brute beast that perisheth, is easy to see.

(3.) Whereas he mentions that as a received rule, *Oportet intelligentem phantasmata speculari*, he may see the contrary asserted by a great philosopher *Hiereboord*, *disp. vol.* II. *p.* 221. *Mens non indiget semper phantasmatis ad suas perceptiones.* Which is laid down as a stated rule, in opposition to that which Mr. *Robe* mentions, *viz.* a saying of old *Aristotle*, much made use of, as *Hiereboord* shews, by adversaries, and improven by them that deny the spirituality and immortality of the soul, contrary to the design of *Aristotle* himself. That the understanding acts by fancies and viewing of phantasms, or merely by material and corporeal powers and

† Life of *Aristotle*, p. (*mihi*) 231.

faculties, and not by a power proper to itſelf, and independent upon the body, is a principle embraced by Atheiſts, thus arguing, namely, *If any action of the ſoul is proper to it, and independent upon the body, it is the underſtanding. But, if the underſtanding cannot be, or act without fancies or phantaſms, the fancy being a corporeal faculty and acted by the help of the body*, even as the phantaſm itſelf is corporeal; hence, they infer *the ſoul itſelf is material, corporeal, and mortal.* Againſt this Atheiſtical principle, the learned *Hiereboord* diſputes at great length, *vol.* I. *p.* 163, 164, 165. and particularly againſt that philoſophical maxim above mentioned; which Mr. *Robe* cites as a rule, and would thereby confirm his poſitions in that paragraph. And it is true that rule holds with reference to corporeal objects Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks of. The underſtanding cannot perceive them as they are ſenſibles, without ſenſes and fancy, and without corporeal ſenſitive powers. But, in this reſpect, they are not the proper objects of rational underſtanding, unleſs theſe material objects be apprehended under the notion of intelligibles: And then they are not viewed properly as corporeal, but under ſome ſpiritual, inviſible, immaterial conſideration; which renders them the objects of underſtanding and judgment, not of mere ſenſe and fancy, whatever cloſe connexion there is between theſe ſenſitive and intellectual faculties, while ſoul and body is unite. Thus the ſame learned author ſhews, how the *underſtanding acting by phantaſms*, is true only with reference to things ſenſible and external, not with reference to things ſpiritual and inviſible: With reſpect to which he proves the following poſition, namely, *That all underſtanding is ſo proper to the ſoul even in this life, that not only hath it no dependence upon the phantaſy, as upon the efficient and ſubject thereof, but alſo hath ſometimes no dependence upon the phantaſy or phantaſm, as upon the object or occaſion thereof*; and inſtances the knowlege that the ſoul may have of God and angels, and of itſelf: And then he refutes the error of thoſe who aſſert, that the underſtanding hath no perception of ſpiritual things, God, angels, or of itſelf, but by analogy of things corporeal, and according to material objects formed in the fancy; ſhewing, that this erroneous ſentiment flows from mens not looking more narrowly into the condition of their own mind, when they view ſpiritual things, or from their forming moſt erroneouſly in their mind very groſs conceptions of ſpiritual things, as if they were almoſt corporeal. Whence is it, ſays he, that the eye can ſee bodies and not ſpirits? Becauſe it is corporeal, and

not

not spiritual; and there is no proportion between a corporeal organ and a spiritual object. But whence does the soul see and understand spiritual and immaterial things? Even because there is some proportion between these and the soul, which is immaterial and spiritual; and it evidences itself to be so, by being able to know and apprehend spiritual things, even without the help of corporeal senses and phantasms. Much more to this purpose hath that learned author, and far better expressions in the *Latin*, which for brevity's sake I do not cite. But it may be thought, to what purpose is all this brought in against Mr. *Robe*; whose imaginary idea he owns respects only corporeal things; and therefore the philosophical maxim about phantasms which he cites, seems abundantly to answer his purpose? I own it would have done so, if he were not confounding the objects of faith with the objects of fancy, by making something corporeal, which is the object of fancy, to be also the object of faith, namely, the human body of Christ, as it is the object of an imaginary idea; in which respect it is only the object of sense or fancy; whereas the object of faith is no visible or corporeal thing, as such; no not the human body of Christ itself, unless it be considered, as it ought to be, under some spiritual, invisible consideration, as it is held forth to us in the scripture. The rule therefore that Mr. *Robe* here brings in, is very impertinently adduced, when his scope is to explain what he calls the object of faith, and yet proves to be the object of sense, by a rule that relates to sensibles, more than to intelligibles; far less does it relate to spirituals and supernaturals, that are the objects of faith.

Again, this rule of philosophy mentioned by Mr. *Robe*, is also opposed and contradicted by the learned Professor *De Vries*, speaking of incorporeal things; (as all objects of faith properly are; however Mr. *Robe* in this paragraph explains his imaginary ideas of corporeal things, which elsewhere he makes so helpful to spiritual knowledge and saving faith, and so corporeal helps to the most spiritual things.) The foresaid author, I say, speaking of incorporeal things, declares, that bodies, or corporeal things, give occasion, and only an occasion, to conceive of them: Which occasion the mind could not make use of, so as thence to proceed to the thoughts of incorporeal things, unless it could think of incorporeal things in an incorporeal manner. And though the thoughts of spiritual things may so far depend upon sense, as that it may furnish occasions of forming them; yet, for the phantasms of these spiritual things, (as all objects

jects of faith are) to be exhibite to the mind, is of itself directly opposite to the very nature of things †. Where also we see, how that renowned Professor of philosophy, as well as the former, limits, restricts, and shews in some cases the falshood of these vulgar rules Mr. *Robe* walks by, namely, That *nothing is in the understanding that was not first in the sense:* And, *That a man cannot understand without the help of phantasms and corporeal representations*; as if the soul depended absolutely upon the body in its operation, because of its union therewith. In opposition to these vulgar rules of philosophy, I might also adduce the learned *Mastricht* disputing at great length, *Cartesianorum gangræna, p.* 206, 207, 208. But, for brevity's sake, I here cite no more witnesses on this point, than the two forementioned; who, together with *Mastricht,* shew how these rules of *Aristotle,* and his followers the *Peripateticks,* have been abused, contrary to *Aristotle*'s own mind and intention.

These learned philosophers I have cited here, distinguish between a twofold dependence. (1.) *Subjective* and *efficient*; as that whereby the *sight* depends upon the *eye.* This they deny the soul hath upon the body. (2.) A dependence *objective* and *occasional*; as that whereby *sight* may be said to depend upon a *wall,* a *tree,* or any other thing, seen, or presented accidentally or occasionally to the sight. This they allow it may have upon the body, and but only sometimes. And hence no fancy or imaginary idea of corporeal things, no objects or ideas of outward or inward sensation, can be any way helpful to the understanding, by the imagination presenting to it the species or image of these corporeal things, as Mr. *Robe* speaks. Bodily eyes can only help to see bodily things: And though they may yield occasion to the mind, yet they cannot help the eyes of the mind to see any spiritual object; no more can any bodily images or phantasms. Christ took occasion from a *well* to speak of the *water of life, John* iv. from the multiplication of the *loaves,* to speak of

† Horum concipiendorum occasionem suppeditarit quandoque corpora: sed tantùm occasionem; quâ mens uti non posset; ut inde ad non-corporeorum cogitationes progrederetur, nisi modo non corporeo cogitaret ipsa non corporea. — Etiam cogitationes de objectis spiritualibus à sensu hactenus pendere, quatenus hic earum formandarum suppeditat occasiones, evincit harum in illis, qui his occasionibus destituuntur, carentia. Talium interim phantasmata menti exhiberi, ipsius rei naturæ per se directè adversatur. Atque hinc apparet, quo modo limitandæ veniant, ut sint veræ, vulgares regulæ: *Nihil est in intellectu, quod non antè fuerit in sensu: Oportet intelligentem phantasmata speculari, &c.*

Determinat. de spiritu, p. 73. *De mente humana, p.* 117, 118.

of the *bread of life*, *John* vi. from the fruit of the *vine* in the last supper, to speak of the *true vine*. Thus, the idea of outward things may minister occasion to meditate on spiritual things: And the sensitive idea may give occasion to the intellectual; but can properly give no more help to see spiritual things, than a glass that helps a man to see his face and body, can help him to see his mind and soul. Thus, the word of God is a glass, wherein truths are represented to our understanding by innumerable similies drawn from sensible objects; as, when Christ is spoke of under the notion of a *Vine*, a *Door*, a *Rock*, a *Well*, a *Tree*, &c. the notion of these things in the head, may give occasion, but can give no help to know the truth intended by them. The imaginative idea cannot give help to rational knowledge. *Sense* can only help to discern sensibles; the *intellect* to discern intelligibles; and *faith* to discern the objects of faith.

These observes may sufficiently answer likewise the boasted quotations Mr. *Robe* produces from *Flavel*, *Burgess*, and *Charnock*, in his letter to Mr. *Fisher*, *p.* 9, 10. whom he quotes for proving, that we cannot think of things invisible without the help of senses and phantasms, or imaginary ideas. But, *as* it is easy for any that read these authors, to see, that, in these places quoted, they are speaking not only of *sensitive* knowledge, I mean, the knowledge that comes by the providential subserviency of sensation, in which view it is certain, that nothing is in the understanding that is not first in the senses, in some respects, (of which maxim I treat further afterwards;) but that they are speaking especially of the heavy, though necessary incumbrances and obstructions which the soul's *intellective* knowledge hath by these bodily senses and phantasms, while in the flesh: *So* it is easy to prove, that these three divines are so far from answering Mr. *Robe*'s purpose, that they are of the same mind with these philosophers I have above quoted. I have exemplified this with relation to *Burgess* and *Charnock* elsewhere in this book; and I shall here do the same with relation to *Flavel*. The passage Mr. *Robe* quotes in him is to be found in his works, *p.* 323. where his professed design is not to shew what Mr. *Robe* wants in him, *That truth* always *transmits itself to our understanding even in this life, by contracting affinity first with our fancies and exterior senses.* But the design of the author there is, by such words as these, to shew the difference between the easy way that separate souls attain knowledge, and the way that souls yet in the body do ordinarily now attain it. Mr. *Robe* takes advantage of what is expressed on this head; but overlooks what the same author

thor says, when speaking directly to this point of *the soul's knowing by phantasms and images, p.* 283. where citing these words, *Phantasia menti offert phantasmata,* PICOL. he says, "The fancy indeed, while the soul is embodied, ordinarily "and for the most part, presents the appearances and likenesses of things to the mind; but yet it can form thoughts "of things which the fancy can present no image of; as when "the soul thinks of God or of itself. When we think of God, "saith *Maximus Tyrius, diss.* 1. We must think of nothing ma"terial, μήτε μέγεθος, μήτε χρῶμα, μήτε ἄλλο τι ὕλης "πάθος." But, more particularly, *p.* 319. where he appears to be of the very same mind with *Hiereboord* and *De Vries,* as above mentioned. I here shall note down his words, in answer to the atheistical objection relating to the soul's understanding only by senses, phantasms, species and images; of which the soul being deprived by separation from the body, it consequently understands nothing. He answers thus, "We deny (says he) "that the soul knows nothing now but by phantasms and images: For it knows itself, its own nature and powers, of "which it cannot feign or form any image or representation. What form, shape or figure can the fancy of a man "cast his own soul into, to help him to understand its nature." Here he cites *Conimb. de anima, l.* 3. *c.* 8. *q.* 8. saying, "*Intellectus incorporea & immaterialia contemplatur, ut Deum & intelligentias; sed hæc nullo modo in phantasiam cadunt, cùm sunt extra limites corporearum virium*; i. e. *The "understanding views things that are incorporeal and immaterial, such as God and intelligences: But these things do "no way fall into, or light upon fancy, because they are without the bounds or limits of corporeal powers.* To understand "by species, (says he,) does not agree to the soul naturally "and necessarily, but by accident, as it is now in union with "the body.—But, though we grant the soul does in many "cases now make use of phantasms, and that the agitation of "the spirits which are in the brain and heart, are conjunct in "its acts of cogitation and intellection; yet, as a searching "scholar well observes, the spirits are rather subjects than "instruments of these actions; and the whole essence of these "acts is antecedent to the motions of the spirits; as when "we use a pen in writing, or a knife in cutting, there is an operation of the soul upon them, before there can be any operation by them. They act as they are first acted; and so do "these bodily spirits. So that, to speak properly, the body "is bettered by the use the soul makes of it in these noble "actions; but the soul is not advantaged by its being tied to

such

" such a body. It can do its own work without it; its operations " follow its essence, not the body to which it is for a time " united." And here *Flavel* cites upon the margin, *Aquinas, p.* 1. *q.* 8. and *Howe's blessedness, p.* 174, 175. More to this purpose he there hath; and then adds, " I wish the favourers " of this opinion may take heed, lest it carry them further than " they intend, even to a denying the soul's existence and im- " mortality, and turn them into downright *Somatists* and *A-* " *theists*."——This leads me further to

An inquiry into some philosophical maxims concerning senses and phantasms.

It may be very necessary for many in this present age, that I offer some more remarks upon Mr. *Robe*'s philosophy expressed by him, *p.* 33. in these words: " For, as it is not " our senses that apprehend corporeal things present, but our " souls by the intervention of our senses; so it is not our " imagination that hath what we call the idea of corporeal " objects absent, but the soul and understanding by the inter- " vention of the imagination; according to that rule, *Opor-* " *tet intelligentem phantasmata speculari*."

This being then a stated principle of Mr. *Robe*'s, and fundamental to the whole ideal superstructure he builds upon it, it is fit it be examined. In order to which, it may be considered, 1*mo*, That, though I assert not, with some, that man hath two souls, *viz.* a sensitive and a rational soul; yet, with orthodox divines and philosophers, I allow that these are two distinct faculties of the soul †; from which, and other such faculties, the soul comes under various distinct names and denominations, according to its various powers and operations ‡. The principal faculties are the *sensitive* and *rational*; from whence, according to some, *soul* and *spirit* are distinguished in scripture, as 1 *Thess.* v. 23. Now, these distinct faculties are not to be so confounded, as if, whenever the soul animates the body, so that it acts sensitively, then it were to be said, it acts rationally; and as if sense and imagination were acts of the rational soul, as such. Therefore, when it is said, " That

† *Impossibile est in uno homine esse plures animas per essentiam differentes; sed una tantùm est anima, quæ vegetativæ, & sensitivæ, & intellectivæ officiis fungitur. Aquin.* 12. *q.* 26. *art.* 3.

‡ *Anima quâ vivimus, mens quâ cogitamus. Lactant. Isidor. Quod latiùs ita exprimere licet.*

Corpora nostra *animant*, ANIMA est: ANIMUS verò, dum *vult*:
SPIRITUS, ut *spirat*: dum *sit* vel *moveat*, est MENS:
Dum *recolit*, MEMOR est: RATIO, dum *judicat* æquè:
Afficit, AFFECTUS: dum *curat*, COR tibi restat.

" it is not our senses that apprehend corporeal things present, " but our souls by the intervention of our senses;" this seems to me a strange way of speaking; because, as it were very absurd for one to say, My soul *sees* such a man, my soul *hears* such a song, my soul *tastes* such a piece of savoury meat, *&c.* as if these were proper actions of the soul: Which yet every one knows belong to the body, or rather to the person that hath both soul and body. To say, a man or a person apprehends corporeal things present by his senses, is indeed true and intelligible; because this apprehension is an act of a person consisting of soul and body: But acts belonging properly to the person, cannot, without absurdity, be appropriate to a part of the person, especially that part which is not the subject of these actions. Hence, one may as well say, it is his body that *knows*, *believes*, and *loves*; as to say, it is his soul that *sees*, *hears* and *tastes*. When a person apprehends any thing by his outward senses, or sensitive faculties of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, smelling; these, being bodily senses, are properly ascribed to the body; not to the soul, which hath none of these senses. Hence, the soul can apprehend nothing by the mere help and intervention of the senses, except in a sensitive way, or in a sensual manner, like the fool in the gospel that said, *Soul, take thy rest, eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years*; when he had nothing laid up for his soul, but a barnful of corn. A sensitive apprehension of outward corporeal things is no act of the rational soul, as it is rational; but rather as it is animal, in regard it is the soul that animates the body and the bodily senses. When therefore it is said, " That it is not our senses " that apprehend corporeal things present, but our souls by " the intervention of our senses;" if it is meant a rational apprehension, or some intellectual consideration of them, then it is not the help and intervention of our senses, but the help and intervention of reason and understanding, that only can bring about this apprehension: And that because *sense* can lead no man any farther than to act *sensitively*; *reason* only can help him to act *rationally*. We are to distinguish, then, between rational acts of the rational soul, and sensitive acts of it. Sense and imagination are not in themselves rational acts, though influenced by the rational soul, as animating the body and quickening it, by giving life, sense and motion to it; yet these are not rational acts, but corporeal acts of corporeal faculties; for (as Mr. *Robe* himself brings in *Charnock*, *Let. p.* 8. saying,) " the faculties that serve for contempla- " tion are either corporeal, as sense and fancy, *&c.*" In which words,

words it is evident both sense and imagination are owned to be corporeal faculties.

Again, when it is said, "The imagination hath not what "we call the idea of corporeal objects absent, but the soul "and understanding by the intervention of the imagination;" the same thing may be asserted of this, as of the former: For imagination is nothing else but the *inward sense* or notion that a man hath in his head of an absent corporeal object. Now, this cannot be called an act of the rational soul as it is rational, but as it is sensitive; for fancy and imagination about corporeal objects, is no other thing but inward sensation, or a notional seeing, hearing, tasting, or handling of these outward things: Which internal sensation or perception in the fancy, includes in itself no reflexion or rational apprehension, while the soul is not acting rationally and intellectually. It seems therefore both false and fallacious in Mr. *Robe*, to assert here, "That it is not the imagination that hath the idea "of the corporeal object, but the soul and understanding by "the intervention of the imagination." To put *soul* and *understanding* here together, is deceitful; because the soul as it is *sensitive* is only here concerned; not the soul as it is rational and *intellective*. For the imaginative faculty, terminating upon objects of sense, belongs to the soul as it is sensitive only; and not as it is intelligent or rational: That is, fancy or imagination is no act of the understanding, or of the rational soul, as such; but only of that soul as it is sensitive: Nor can it act upon these corporeal objects intelligently or rationally, by the help and intervention of fancy and imagination; but only by the help of reason and understanding.

2*do*, I would here next consider the rule Mr. *Robe* appeals to, *viz. Oportet intelligentem phantasmata speculari*; that is, *The speculation of phantasms is necessary to the understanding of things or truths.* When the scope of Mr. *Robe*'s letter seems so much to lye in making senses and imaginations such great helps to knowledge, another rule in philosophy very fib and similar to this here mentioned, seems to be equally espoused by his doctrine; and as necessary to support his principle anent the *senses*, as this to support his principle anent *imaginations*: The rule is, as elsewhere mentioned, *viz. Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensibus*; that is, *Nothing is in the understanding that was not first in the senses* Though Mr. *Robe* has not mentioned this, as he does, and seems also to adopt elsewhere, *Second letter to Mr. Fisher*, *p.* 7. yet it is of the same import with the former; which however improven by philosophers, yet how fitly brought in here by Mr.

Robe, and mixed with his divinity or doctrine relating to the object of saving faith, may be considered. These rules relate indeed to natural senses and fancies: And it is no wonder that some such rule be here adduced; for the confounding of faith and sense, or faith and fancy, seems to be the great design and end of Mr. *Robe*'s performance; (I mean, *intentio operis*,) whether it be the design of the performer or not.

However unfit I am for a work of this sort; yet providence seems to call me out unto this difficult task of essaying to shew the vain philosophy imported in these generally received rules, especially when applied to divine subjects and matters of faith. It is said of *Democritus*, that there is nothing in the whole workmanship of nature, of which he did not write. And of *Aristotle* it is said, he was the rule, yea, and the miracle of nature, learning itself, and the very sun of knowledge. Yet both these are not only said, but proved by *Lactantius*, to be learned idiots ‡. How, says one, have the schools of *Epicurus* and *Aristotle*, (from whom the above rules or maxims are borrowed,) the *Cartesians*, and other sects of *philosophers*, abused and troubled the world with a kind of philosophical enthusiasm? And, since it is also a true saying, (of *Picus Mirandola*, *Veritatem quærit philosophia, invenit theologia,*) that *philosophy seeks, but theology finds the truth*; how unsuitable is it, that divines, who may be supposed to have found the truth, should borrow rules and maxims for finding it, from these philosophers, who at best were but in quest of truth, and yet never found it? This is like a going down to the uncircumcised to sharpen their tools at least, as if there were not a smith in ISRAEL. *Seneca* had an excellent saying, *O quàm contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana se erexerit! O what a pitiful thing is man, if his soul could not soar above these earthly things!* Whence we may infer, says the author of *Origines Sacræ*, "That "our rational souls are of a far more noble and refined na- "ture than that more feculant or dreggy principle of imagi- "nation, which can go no further than our senses carry it." And, if the object of faith can be no corporeal object, as such, but the invisible God properly, I may say, with the same author, *p.* 367. "We may as soon come by the sight "of colours to understand the nature of sounds, as we can "by any corporeal phantasm come to have the true idea of "God." And, *p.* 372. "Corporeal phantasms are so far "from helping us in forming this idea, that they alone hin- "der us from a distinct conception of it, while we attend to "them."—*p.* 412. "If all our conceptions were nothing "else

‡ *Lactant lib.* 3. *cap.* 17, 18.

" else but the images of corporeal things left in the brain, " the judgment of the mind must of necessity be according " to the impressions which are made upon the organs of sense." *Epicurus* made the original of all things in the universe to be the fortuitous concourse of atoms, and the soul to be nothing else but a system of the most smooth and round atoms. " These " atoms, says the *Epicurean* doctrine, *Orig. Sacr. p.* 404. of " which the soul is composed, are capable of sensation. Thence " it comes to pass, that the soul sees in the eye, hears in the " ear, and smells in the nostrils. This is the most which is " made of the opinion of *Epicurus*, by the late sedulous vin- " dicator of him; which yet himself calls, *intoleranda opinio*, " an opinion not to be tolerated." Yet how fib to that opinion seems that doctrine in hand here, which makes senses, fancies or phantasms, the springs, sources, and great helps to our knowledge of truth? This is the very doctrine of *Epicurus*, which *Lucretius* acknowledges and contends for, *lib.* 4.

Invenies primis à sensibus esse creatam
Notitiam veri.

Where it is asserted, that the knowledge of truth is the creature of the senses. Which assertion seems to me not very far different from that maxim above mentioned, and received by many philosophers, *That there is nothing in the understanding that is not first in the sense.* But, however this seems to be the apparent order and method of the knowledge that comes by sensation; yet I think it would require no extraordinary skill in metaphysicks, to shew, that the reverse of that maxim is rather true in some respect, namely, *That there is nothing in the senses,* (as *prudently used*) *that is not first in the understanding*; that is, There is no knowledge comes by occasion of the senses in man, that is not first seminally in the rational soul, or intellective faculty thereof; without which the bodily senses in human creatures could give no manner of help or assistance towards the rational knowledge of any intelligible thing, any more than they can do in brutes.

By *sense* in that maxim seems necessarily to be understood, either the mere outward senses, together with the inward sensation that belongs to the animated body; or the prudential use of these senses. To understand it in the first of these respects, would render the maxim very absurd: For it would be this, *That nothing is in the understanding that is not first in the corporeal senses*; which were to make the bodily senses, not only the occasions, but the very first seat and subject of reason and understanding; and thus, with the *Epicureans*, to

make

make all the knowledge of truth the creature of the senses. Yea, if in this respect there were nothing in the understanding that is not first in the senses, then a man might need no more understanding than what he has in his bodily senses; for there he has all that he can have afterward in his understanding. Here is indeed a confused chaos, an *Epicurean* concourse of very different atoms, namely, the senses of the body including in their nature all the powers of the soul.

But then, the senses may be considered as they are prudential, (not that I think prudence applicable properly to bodily senses.) But I find some of the learned by *sense* understand the prudent use of the senses, yea, the rational improvement thereof; and so seem to make *sense* much the same thing with *understanding*. And in this view to say, *Nothing is in the understanding that is not first in the sense*, seems also to make that maxim absurd; because it would be to explain *(idem per idem)* the same thing by the same thing; only with another word: For, when by sense is meant judgment and understanding, then the maxim would be, *Nothing is in the understanding that is not first in the understanding*. Thus, some by sense mean conscience, or a consciousness of what we think of, and a reflexion on what we see or hear; and so, by having or exercising sense, mean the same thing that is imported in the *Latin* word *sentio* or *sentire*, which signifies to think, to resent, to suppose or deem; as also, to feel, to discern, to perceive or understand: And so may be supposed to include assent, dissent, consent and all the branches of rational cogitation. To this purpose are the words of *Cartesius*, cited by *Amerpoel* †: *Cogitationis nomine, intelligo illa omnia, quæ, nobis conscius, in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis conscientia est: atque ita non modò intelligere, velle, imaginari, sed etiam sentire; (si sentire intelligam de ipso sensu, sive conscientio videndi, aut ambulandi, quia tunc refertur ad mentem, quæ sola sentit, sive cogitat se videre aut ambulare.) Idem est hic quod cogitare.* To interpret *sense* this way, would make the above maxim import no more, but that a man can understand nothing, unless he has a rational soul, capable to reflect and reason. If this were all the meaning, people might think many philosophers very idle, to tell the world, upon the matter, that no man hath sense and judgment, but he that hath it.

I know not therefore the meaning of the foresaid rule or maxim, unless it import, that sensitive knowledge is the fountain of intellective knowledge; and so sensation the fountain of reflexion, or sense the fountain of reason. And thus Impressions

† *Cartesius Mosaizans, p.* 250, 251.

preſſions made upon the organs of ſenſe would be made the foundation of all human underſtanding: Which, according to my view, none can allow, without denying the God who made them, and gave them living rational ſouls, endued both with ſenſitive and intellective powers. Theſe powers in man flow not from one another, however ſubſervient they are to one another, but both from the rational ſoul, which is capable of knowledge ſuperior to all that comes by ſenſation: For, as the author of *Origines Sacræ* ſays, *p.* 412. "The higheſt conceptions which depend upon ſenſe, can a-"mount no higher than imagination.——There is a principle "in man which proceeds in a different way of operation, "than ſenſation does. There are ſuch operations in the "ſoul which are not imaginations." This he proceeds to prove by ſeveral arguments; ſuch as, "(1.) The correcting "the errors of imagination, *&c.* (2.) Reflex acts of the "mind upon itſelf.——Imagination cannot reflect upon itſelf; "for that, proceeding upon corporeal images, muſt have "ſuch a repreſentation from the ſenſes of what it acts upon. "Now, what image of itſelf can be conveyed to the ima-"gination through the external organs of ſenſe? The eye "may ſee, through the motion of the objects of ſight preſ-"ſing upon it: But how can it ſee that it ſees? So the i-"magination receives the image conveyed to the brain; but "what ſhop hath it to make new ones of itſelf, and ſo be "guilty of the greateſt idolatry of worſhipping its own image? "But, though the imagination cannot thus reflect; yet we "find ſuch a principle within us, that is very apt to retire "into itſelf, and recollect things which could never have "been conſerved ſo long in the ſhop of ſhadows and ima-"ginations, *&c.* (3.) The profound ſpeculations of the "mind argues a power far above imagination and corpore-"al motion, *&c.*" And, *p.* 397. "Nothing can render the "philoſophy of *Epicurus* more juſtly ſuſpected to any ratio-"nal and inquiſitive mind, than his making the ſenſes the "only certain conveyer of the truth of things to the mind. "The ſenſes, I grant, do not in themſelves deceive any. "But, if I make the impreſſions of ſenſe to be the only rule "for the mind to judge by, of the truth of things, I make "way for the greateſt impoſtures, and the moſt erring judg-"ment: For, if my mind affirm every thing to be in its "proper nature, according to that idea which the imaginati-"on hath received from the impreſſions upon the organs of "ſenſe, it will be impoſſible for me ever to underſtand the "right nature of things; becauſe the nature of things may

"remain

" remain the same, when all these things in them which af-
" fect the organs of sense, may be altered; and because the
" various motions and configurations of the particles of mat-
" ter may make such an impression upon the senses, which
" may cause an idea of that in the things themselves, which
" yet may be only in the manner of sensation; as some
" philosophers suppose it to be in heat and cold. Now, if
" the mind judge of the nature of things, according to those
" ideas which come from the impressions made upon the
" organs of sense, how is it possible, it should ever come to
" a right judgment of the natures of things? So that, in
" reference even to the grossest material beings, it must be
" the perception only of the *mind*, that can truly inform us
" of their proper nature and essence. Besides, there are ma-
" ny ideas of things in the mind of man, which are capable
" to have properties demonstrated of them, which never
" owed their original to our senses, and were never impor-
" ted to the mind at the keys of the senses: Such are most
" mathematical figures; ——— such are all mutual respects
" (or relations) of things to each other, *&c. &c.*" To the like purpose are these words, *p.* 579. " Must all intelle-
" ctual beings be proscribed out of the order of nature,
" because they cannot pass the scrutiny of sense? And by
" the same rule, all *colours* be dashed out, because they can-
" not be *heard?* All *noises* silenced, because they cannot be
" seen? For why may not one *sense* be set to judge of all
" objects of sense, with far more reason, than sense itself
" be set to judge over intellectual beings? But yet, it is
" wisely done of the Atheist, to make sense his *judge*; for,
" if we once appeal to this, he knows our cause is lost.——
" If God were to be tried by the judgment of sense, he must
" cease to be God; for how can an infinite and spiritual
" Being be discerned by the judgment of sense? And, if
" he be not an infinite and spiritual being, he is not God."

The rule Mr. *Robe* mentions about phantasms, is a saying of *Aristotle*, which, as it is misapplied by lax and libertine philosophers, is improven, the same way with that of *Epicurus*, above named, out of *Lucretius*, in favours of their Atheistical purposes; making senses and phantasms the natural fountains of all our knowledge of truth; and overlooking the God of nature; and not only *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. i. 18. but attempting to erase and destroy that *semen cognitionis Dei*, as *Beza* on that text calls it, *that seed of the knowledge of God yet remaining in man.* Such an enemy to God is that vain philosophy, that it grudges

ges to own him so far, as to acknowledge the least relick of his image in man; insomuch that, instead of ascribing the original of natural knowledge to that remaining seed of imprisoned truth, and consequently to the God that sowed it in the field of our natural understandings at first, they will rather ascribe all knowledge to the fortuitous concourse of external and internal atoms; I mean, to outward senses, and inward phantasms. *Vain man would be wise; but the world by wisdom know not God*; and the god of this world hath so blinded the eyes of men with these innumerable atoms of vain imaginations, that they cannot see the God of nature, even in the field of nature; far less can they see him, as the God of glory, in the field of grace. And how much my opponent intermixes his best divinity with such vain philosophy, may be evident to all that have any spiritual discerning. I own it is very hard for natural eyes to see any other fountain of knowledge, than what is obvious to the natural senses. But, if a man, being drowned in sense, imagine that sense only gives him knowledge, and that he hath no other principle of knowledge, because he cannot see it, it would argue, he were dreadfully blinded with the atoms of *Epicurus*; and may as well alledge, that outward objects presented to his *eye*, give him *sight*, because his eye that sees these things, cannot see itself. We profanely trace second causes, by often overlooking the first.

As I conceive it to be a mistake in *divinity*, relating to the covenant of grace, that many confound the *qualities* of the *covenanted*, namely, that they are *believing* and *penitent* persons, with the *condition* of the covenant; and hence make *faith* and *repentance* the conditions of it, in a proper sense; while they are only the conditions of order and connexion between one blessing of the covenant with another; some other thing, *viz.* Christ's righteousness being the proper condition of all the blessings thereof: So I am ready to think it is a mistake in *philosophy* relating to *human understanding*, that the other qualities and powers in man, such as *sense* and *imagination*, (giving occasion, from external objects, to the understanding to exert itself,) are confounded by many, with the proper *cause* and *fountain* of that knowledge that is naturally in the rational soul. The *seed* and *root* of that knowledge of truth which God hath sown there, springs up, as it were, thro' that gross *earth*, which is mistaken for the *mother* and *cause* of it: Whereas the natural order and connexion of inferior sensitive faculties, occasioning the exercise and increase of natural knowledge, ought not to be blended with the proper

cauſe and fountain of human underſtanding; otherwiſe we open the door to Atheiſts, to aſcribe that to mere natural cauſes, which ought to be aſcribed to the God of nature; and to give that honour to the creature that is due to the Creator; or rather, to make creatures, ſenſes, phantaſms, all in all here, and God nothing at all. How much theſe foreſaid rules are abuſed by learned and Atheiſtical Rationaliſts to this purpoſe, is well known; and what a handle is given to ſuch by my opponent's way of magnifying natural ſenſes and imaginations, as the great ſources and helps of knowledge, is eaſy to ſee.

I am ſo jealous of the danger profeſſed Chriſtians are in, of loſing their way in the thickets of Pagan philoſophy, from which they borrow many dangerous maxims, that I would not chuſe even that way of ſpeaking which is very common among ſome Chriſtian philoſophers, *viz.* of ſenſation and reflexion, as the fountains of knowledge, *Locke* on *human underſtanding*, &c. from whence they ſay all the ideas we can naturally have, do ſpring. And the reaſon why I love not, that human underſtanding ſhould be aſcribed to theſe magnified fountains thereof, which appear to me rather as the pipes and conduits *through which*, than the ſprings *from which* it flows: The reaſon, I ſay, is, becauſe, as I take *ſenſation* to be only the natural action of the ſoul as it is ſenſitive, while in the body which it animates, and *reflexion* to be the natural action of the ſoul as it is rational, when it comes to the free and due exerciſe of reaſon: So I think the immediate fountain of theſe actions, is the ſoul endued naturally from heaven with theſe ſenſitive and rational faculties; which, like natural and innate habits, are brought forth to act in due time, according as objects are preſented ſuitable to theſe faculties; that is, things ſenſible, external, and material, to the *ſenſitive* faculty; and things intelligible, to the *intellective*; giving occaſion to theſe faculties or habits, if I may ſo call them, to act and exert themſelves. Whether this be called *ſubjective* light, conſiſting in our ability to perceive, diſcern, know and judge of objects, as contradiſtinct from *actual* knowledge, or whether it be called *innate* knowledge, in contradiſtinction from *acquired*, or whatever name elſe it may come under; I take this to be the *fountain*, root and ſpring of all *acquired* knowledge; of which none are capable that want this ſeed, this faint remains of the divine image: So faint, ſo ſmall, ſo languid, that I may ſuppoſe it like the tender ſmoke of a candle, when both flame and fire is extinguiſhed; yet the remaining fume or ſmoke, when brought within the reach of any other fire or flame,

flame, doth natively catch it, even at some distance; so as to set it a-burning and flaming again; which it could not do, if there were no remains at all of the fire and flame about it. Such is the native power and aptitude of that remaining heat and smoke to exert itself, as long as the igneous particles have life and motion, which, whenever fire approaches, is naturally prompt and ready to receive it. Thus it is here: So low and deeply buried under the rubbish of corruption our natural knowledge of God is, that this candle of the Lord within us is, as it were, quite extinguished both as to the fire and flame, and nothing remains but some little heat and smoke; which yet has so much of the nature of knowledge, as to be capable, or apt to receive and take hold of the light that approaches to it. This I call *innate*, and suppose to be so much the root and source of *acquired* knowledge, that none at all could be acquired without it. And, to ascribe knowledge to external causes, without this presupposed, to me, appears a denying, so far, the divine original of the light of nature.

According to this view of matters which I have expressed, I think it easy to evade the force of Mr. *Locke*'s reasonings anent innate ideas, (though I adopt not these terms,) particularly concerning God and worship; wherein his philosophy seems far enough to oppose and contradict the divinity of the Apostle *Paul*, *Rom.* i. 18, 19. and ii. 14, 15. His reasoning makes it seem, as if it were very absurd to suppose, "there "are innate, impressed truths originally, and before the use "of reason; and yet, for men to be always ignorant of them, "till they come to the use of reason, it is, says he, in effect "to say, that men know and know them not at the same time.‡" But, from what is said, the answer is easy, That it can be no more absurd to assert, that all natural knowledge is *originally* first in that divine root above mentioned, through whatever corporeal sensation it may *actually* sprout up, than it is absurd to assert, that all trees and plants are first radically in the seed, through whatever earth and dung they afterward grow up. It is true, *actual seeing hath a cause without*, as that same author elsewhere says. But, though this may be granted in regard of the external object presented; yet that outward object can neither give me *sight*, if I am blind and want eyes, nor *knowledge*, to distinguish that object from another, if I want reason and judgment.

This leads me to what may be a necessary digression further on this head touching Mr. *Locke*'s philosophy thereanent,

‡ *Locke* on *human understanding*, p. 8.

on human understanding, cap. 2. § 21, 22. He alledges, that to say, notions are imprinted in the mind, and yet at the same time to say, the mind is ignorant of them, as he exemplifies in infants and idiots, is to make the impressions nothing. "Why, *says he*, no proposition can be said to be in the mind "which it never yet knew, which it was never conscious of: "For, if any one, then, by the same reason, all propositions that are true, and the mind is capable of ever assenting to, may be said to be in the mind, and to be imprinted." This he goes on to judge absurd; alledging, that, "if "the capacity of knowing be the natural impression contended for, then all the truths a man ever comes to know, "will by this account be every one of them innate.——No "body, I think, ever denied that the mind is capable of knowing several truths. The capacity, say they, is innate, the "knowledge is acquired, But then, to what end such contests for certain innate maxims? If truth can be imprinted "on the understanding without being perceived, I see no "difference there can be between any truths the mind is capable of knowing in respect of their original."

Now, I can see no great strength of reason in all this. Some things here are reckoned absurd, I think, upon very weak grounds. I only premise, that his reasoning seems to proceed upon a denying, or not owning at all, the original perfection of human understanding, when God first created man after his own image, particularly in the knowledge of himself first, and then of the creatures; which knowledge could not but be of a very extensive and comprehensive nature; and upon a denying, or not owning, that man by his fall has lost this image of God, so as his light is turned to darkness, and his knowledge to ignorance, and nothing remains except that dormant seed of natural truth mentioned by the Apostle, *Rom.* i. 18. which lies sleeping in that natural capacity of knowing truths, until it be *awakened* by the *natural means* which God, as the God of nature, hath appointed unto actual natural knowledge; or *restored* also by the *spiritual means* which God, as the God of grace, hath appointed unto actual spiritual or saving knowledge; and, consequently, restored, in what measure and degree God sees fit, to the knowledge of what the mind of man had not only an original capacity of knowing, but also actually knew before in its primitive state of integrity. This restoration comes by him *who came to restore what he took not away*; and *who was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, John. i. 9. The learned Dr. *Arrowsmith* on that text says, here is meant,

(1.)

" (1.) The light of reason, *John* i. 4. *In him was life; and* " *the life was the light of men.* (2.) The light of conscience, " *Prov.* xx. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord,* " *searching all the inward parts of the belly.* The spirit is " oft put for conscience: *The things of a man no man know-* " *eth, but the spirit of man which is in him*; called the candle " of the Lord, because it lights and directs all men. We all, " by our fall in *Adam*, lost not only our supernaturals, but " forfeited even our naturals. All the light we had, was " blown out by that fall: Therefore what we have now, we " owe to Christ; the natural light we have, we owe to Christ. " (3.) The light of the word, (this is supernatural:) *Thy word is* " *a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path*, Psal. cxix. 105. " (4.) The light of grace; (which is also supernatural:) *Eph.* " i. 8. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened*; *that* " *ye may know what is the hope of his calling and the riches* " *of his glory.*" These are several lights that come from Christ, beside the light of the sun, and the light of glory, that are not here spoken of. " Christ (says he) doth enlighten e- " very man that cometh into the world; but not every man " alike. True, they all partake of the light of reason, and " the light of conscience: But there is a difference and ine- " quality even in that light; because reason and conscience " are in some more vigorous than in others. What shall we " say of infants and of idiots? We must say, even these have " some light from Christ; but not like other men. Infants " have the light of reason, though not the use of reason: " That gift they have from Christ. Idiots have the use of rea- " son in some lower degree; yea, and of conscience too in " some lower acts; though neither reason nor conscience are " so vigorous in them, as in other men. The light of the " word is not equally dispensed to all; as appears, *Psal.* cxlvii. " 19, 20. *&c.*" To the like purpose *Charnock, vol.* II. *p.* 514. shewing how reason is blind in the things of God, says, " Man " is said to have no more understanding in regard of the spi- " ritual things of God than a beast, *Psal.* xlix. 20.—Corru- " ption, like smoke, rising still from the furnace of that hell " in the heart, darkens the heavens from our sight. There " is no knowledge of God man since the fall can lay claim " to by his own reason, without some illumination. We know " nothing of God by the creatures, but as God spreads an in- " ward light upon the mind. In nature there is a manifesta- " tion *in us*, as well as a manifestation *to us*, Rom. i. 19. yet " it is a common illumination."

The original perfection of human understanding which Mr. *Locke*

Locke seems to overlook, his opponent the author of *Origines Sacræ* makes notable mention of, *p.* 2. "That saying of *Plato*, "that all knowledge is remembrance, and all ignorance forgetfulness, is a certain and undoubted truth ‡, if by forgetfulness be meant loss, and by remembrance the recovery of "these notions and conceptions of things which the mind of "man once had in its pure and primitive state, wherein the understanding was the truest microcosm, in which all the beings "of the inferior world were faithfully represented, acording to "their true, native and genuine perfections. God created "the soul of man, not only capable of finding out the truth "of things, but furnished him with a sufficient κριτήριον, or "touchstone, to discover truth from falshood, by a light set up "in his understanding; which, if he had attended to, he might "have secured himself from all impostures and deceits.—If "it belong to the perfection of the sensitive faculties to discern what is pleasant from what is hurtful, it must needs be "the perfection of the rational to find out the difference of truth "from falshood.—Therefore man was endued with a large "stock of intellectual knowledge; which is the most natural "and genuine perfection belonging to his rational being, *&c.*" *p.* 2. He shews how it behoved "the soul to be created in a "clear and distinct knowledge of God, because of man's immediate obligation to obedience to him, which must necessarily suppose the knowledge of him whose will must be his "rule: For, if man were not fully convinced, in the first moment after his creation, of the *being* of him whom he was "to obey, his first work and duty would not have been actual "obedience, but a search whether there was any supreme, infinite, and eternal being, or no.—The clear knowledge "of God will further appear most necessary to man in his first "creation, if we consider that God created him for this end "and purpose, to enjoy converse and an humble familiarity with himself.—Converse with God was as natural to him "as his being was."

The natural remains of the divine image yet in all men, or the seed of *truth* spoken of, *Rom.* i. 18. Mr. *Locke* quite overlooks also, as not answering his scheme. *Mastricht, prodr. theol. p.* 82. speaking of these remains of the image of God, says, "These God was pleased to leave remaining in man after the "fall, not only that they might be unmerited marks and tokens of his goodness and clemency towards us, but also "that they might be, as it were, the seeds from whence the "divine

‡ *Not upon his, and* Origen's *notion sucked in from him, of the pre-existence; but,*]

" divine image might afterward bloſſom again, by reſtoring " grace; and that the unbelieving might for ever be rendered " inexcuſable."

Theſe things being premiſed, I offer my thoughts upon Mr. *Locke*'s forementioned poſitions, which are like foundations on which he builds his whole work. To me it ſeems ſtrange in a philoſopher, to ſuppoſe, that *it is abſurd to alledge, That truths may be imprinted on the underſtanding, and yet not perceived*; when there ſeems nothing more common in the experience of mankind, than that a man who hath the greateſt ſtock of habitual knowledge and underſtanding, relating to many truths; yet, while his body ſleeps, or his mind is in a muſe about other things, he perceives none of theſe truths, till the dormant habit be rouſed and raiſed to exerciſe, by a new preſentation of theſe truths or objects of knowledge; or even by the appearance of ſuch truths or objects as he (perſonally) never had the actual view or knowledge of before; yet how eaſy is it for the mind, previouſly provided with a ſtock of abilities for diſcerning things new and old, to travel through a new field opened up to it? I ſee no greater abſurdity in ſaying, that one may have a ſtock of ſeminal or habitual knowledge, though he have no actual knowledge, than to ſay, one may have a ſtock of ſenſes, though he hath no actual ſenſation, or conſciouſneſs of the acts or exerciſe of any of his ſenſes; as a child not born, or a man in a deep ſleep: Or a natural ſtore of affections ſubjectively in him, and yet affected with nothing, till occaſions and objects appear. One may have a good pair of eyes, and yet ſee nothing till light be given and objects be preſented. Nor is it an improper way of ſpeaking, to ſay, a man hath his eyes or ſight, though he be not actually ſeeing. And as little I think is it improper to ſay, a man hath underſtanding and knowledge, though he be not actually knowing or perceiving the truths he has the impreſs of in his underſtanding.

I am of the mind, that the univerſal aſſent of mankind to ſome truths, upon their very firſt propoſal to the rational ſoul, is ſufficient to prove, that this aſſent flows from innate principles, or from ſubjective light and knowledge; which is as neceſſary in order to all actual objective and acquired knowledge, as inward ſight in the eye is neceſſary to the ſeeing the outward light of the ſun. This capacity of ſeeing and knowing what our perfect nature once before ſaw and knew perfectly, is ſomething; and ſomething more than Mr. *Locke*'s reaſoning imports. Nor could I allow, that all knowledge is acquired by external means, any more than I could allow that

ſight

ſight is acquired by the ſun. The light, however clear, cannot ſupply the defect of diſcerning power. And here I may ſay by the by, no wonder that many diſcern not the ſupernatural light of the word, ſince all men have put out their own eyes, or impaired by their own fault that power of diſcerning God, either by his word or works, which our natures originally had.

I own then, that human underſtanding was originally ſo extenſive as not to be confined to certain innate maxims or truths, but extended to all truly, though not equally. And therefore, though I could grant, that all truths whatſoever are knowable by that innate light and capacity, according as the truths are preſented and the capacity fitted; yet I think there is a difference between ſome truths the *mind is capable of knowing*, and others, *even in reſpect of their original:* For, as I apprehend *Adam*'s knowledge of God in his innocent ſtate, was the root and ſpring of his extenſive knowledge of other things; and his knowledge of the Creator the leading cauſe and principle of all that knowledge and underſtanding he had anent the creatures: So I think the yet remaining notices and notions we have naturally of a God, and the perſuaſion of this truth, *That there is a God,* and ſome maxims immediately depending thereupon, are ſo far different from the knowledge we have of other things, as to be more deeply ingraven, as it were. And, ſo far as men do not fill up the gravings with dung, but ſuffer them to remain legible, and to be attended unto, ſo far do they naturally promote the righter knowledge of all other things; becauſe God is the firſt light; *and in his light we ſee light.* Which I ſuppoſe will hold both in nature and grace: For, in ſo far as this firſt light is attended unto and rightly improven, ſo far all other things ſeen therein are ſeen and known to advantage, and in their proper nature. "Man's "underſtanding (ſays *Flavel* on the ſoul) is a faculty of the "reaſonable ſoul, by which a man apprehends and judges all "intelligible things. The object of it is every being, ſo far "as it is true in itſelf, and apprehenſible by man. Yea, (ſays "he) all ſouls are created with a capacity of enjoying the in"finite and bleſſed God. They need no other powers, fa"culties or capacities, than they are by nature endued with, "if theſe be but ſanctified, to make them equally happy with "them that are before the throne, and with joy unſpeakable "behold his bleſſed face. We paſs through the fields, and "take up an egg which lies under a clod, and ſee nothing in "it but a little ſqualid matter; yea, but in that egg is ſemi"nally and potentially contained ſuch a melodious lark as

"it

" it may be at the same time we see mounting heaven-ward, " and singing delicious notes above. So it is here; these pow- " ers that are now lodged in despicable bodies on earth, " have in their nature a capacity for the same enjoyments " and employments with these in heaven: They are beings " improvable, by grace, to the highest perfections attainable " by any creature."

Mr. *Locke* owns, that none deny *there is a capacity in the mind of knowing several truths.* This indeed will deny by none; yet it will not agree with the scheme of mere rationalists, to own, that this natural capacity is the ground on which grows that seed of truth sown in every man's soul, *Rom.* i. 18. that it is a part of the natural remains of the divine image; and that this capacity includes seminally all that subjective knowledge of natural things and truths out of which actual and acquired knowledge arises. I contend not for the terms *innate ideas.* But, whereas it is owned, the understanding is capable of knowing several truths; why only of *several truths?* I could allow, as I have said above, that the understanding is capable of knowing *all truths*, according as they are revealed, and the eye of the understanding opened; even as the eyes of the body are capable of seeing all visible things that are presented to them: And this capacity we call *sight*, even where there cannot be actual seeing, because of darkness, or sleep, or the like. Thus also the understanding is capable of knowing, not only several things, but all things knowable and intelligible, according as they are revealed, and the eyes of the understanding opened to see them; and this we call knowledge and understanding, even though, before the light shine, and the organs be rightly disposed, the object be not actually known or understood.

On these, and such like accounts, I am not fond of these ways of speaking that seem to confound the external order and procedure of human knowledge with the internal cause and fountain of it, and to trace the conduits, means or occasions thereof, so as to ascribe a causality to them, and give a handle to Atheistical minds to overlook the first cause and proper fountain thereof. Human understanding hath its rise from no other fountain at first, but infinite understanding in him of whom it is said, *Psal.* xciv. 9, 10. *He that formed the eye, shall not he see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?* I chuse not to make sensation and reflexion the fountains of human understanding; but would rather chuse to say the contrary, that human understanding is the fountain of sensation and reflexion; I mean, the human soul, which

God hath endued with ſenſitive and intellective powers. And I am afraid, that the vain philoſophy that tends to lead people off from this foundation, is the fountain of that *Scepticiſm* and *Epicuriſm*, that *Atheiſm* and *Deiſm*, that abounds ſo much in the preſent age.

But, as Dr. *Stillingfleet*, ſpeaking of that hypotheſis of the late famous *French* philoſopher *Des Cartes*, wherein he undertakes to give an account of the original of the univerſe, from the mere mechanical laws of matter and motion, " Though, " *ſays he*, there be as much reaſon as charity, to believe he " never intended his hypotheſis as a foundation of Atheiſm, " having made it ſo much his buſineſs to aſſert the exiſtence " of a Deity, and immateriality of the ſoul; yet it is apt to " be abuſed to that end, by perſons Atheiſtically diſpoſed, be- " cauſe of his aſcribing ſo much to the power of matter:" So I may ſay of ſome late philoſophers, as well as ancient ones, eſpecially thoſe of the Chriſtian denomination, that, whatever reaſon there is to believe, that they never intended their hypotheſes relating to human knowledge, as a foundation of Atheiſm, having made it ſo much their buſineſs to aſſert the exiſtence of a Deity, and to acknowledge God the ſovereign author and diſpoſer of all things; yet, to me it would ſeem, their hypotheſes are moſt apt to be abuſed to that end, by perſons Atheiſtically diſpoſed, becauſe of their aſcribing ſo much to the power of ſenſation: For they ſeem to make the moſt exalted knowledge that men can naturally have, to ariſe only from that reflexion which ariſes from ſenſation, or the impreſſion that outward objects make upon the organs of ſenſe. This ſcheme gratifies the carnal minds of ſenſual men, that were deeply enough immerſed into ſenſe, and thoughtleſs of that God in whom they live, and move, and have their being; and who, as the Father of ſpirits, has given them rational and immortal ſouls, endued naturally with theſe ſenſitive and intellective faculties, that are the remains of the divine image, and the fountain of all natural knowledge.

We read, *Rom.* ii. 14. of the light of nature, and of the *Gentiles that have not the law, their doing by nature the things of the law.* " This light and law of nature (ſays *Burgeſs* in his " *Vindiciæ legis, lect.* 7.) conſiſts partly in light and knowledge " of ſpeculative principles, and partly in practice, and obedi- " ence to practical principles. — It is the relick and remnant of " the image of God. For, howſoever the image of God did pri- " marily conſiſt in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; yet ſecondarily it did alſo comprehend the powers and faculties of the " reaſonable ſoul in the acts thereof; and this latter part abides.

" — There

" ——— There remains in man some light still, which the " Apostle, *Rom.* i. calls truth; he vouchsafes that name to " it, they *hold the truth in unrighteousness.*" To this purpose many divines shew, how far the image of God is lost, and how far it remains; (as, *Ursin. opera de creatione hominis, tom.* I. *p.* 558. *Amerpoel, Cartesius Mosaizans, p.* 245. *Mastricht, prodrom. p.* 82. *&c.*) Among the remaining parts of that image are reckoned, even in natural and unregenerate men, (1.) The incorporeal, rational, invisible, and immortal substance of the soul, with its powers. (2.) Many notices in the mind, of God, of nature, of the difference of things honest and vile; (which notices) are the principles of arts. (3.) Certain vestiges and seeds of moral virtues, *&c.* The learned Dr. *Owen*, on the *Spirit, p.* 560. says, " There " are some general commands, I acknowledge, so clear " in the light of nature, as that no question can be made, " but that what is required in them, is our duty to perform; " such are they, That God is to be loved: That others are " not to be injured †: That every one's right is to be rendered to him; whereunto all reasonable creatures do assent at their first proposal. And, where any are found to " live in an open neglect or seem to be ignorant of them, " their degeneracy into beastiality is open, and their sentiments " not at all to be regarded." The great *Calvin*, in his *Institutions, lib.* I. *c.* 3. § 3. says, " it is evident to all " who have a right judgment, that there is engraven into " the minds of men the sense of a Deity, which can never " be deleted; yea, that this persuasion, *That there is some God*, is naturally inbred, and so deeply fixed in the very " heart, that nature itself suffers none to forget it."

To this purpose, it is said, *Origines sacræ, p.* 367. speaking of the notion of a Deity, " That it is hard to pitch on any " other notion which has fewer intanglements in it, to a " mind so far metaphysical, as to abstract from sense and " prejudice. I grant it is very difficult, nay impossible, for " those to have any true settled notion of a God, who search for " an idea of him in their fancies, and were never conscious " to themselves of any higher faculty in their souls, than " mere imagination. Such may have *imaginem Jovis*, or " *galeatæ Minervæ*, as he in *Tully* speaks; some idea of an " idol in their minds, but none of the true God."

Whatever vestiges of God, and natural notices of him, remain

† Cicero a heathen asserted a great truth, *Hominem naturæ obedientem homini nocere non posse. i. e. A man obedient to the law of nature cannot hurt a man.*

main yet in the minds of men; yet such is the dreadful degeneracy and corruption of man's nature since the fall, that not only the grosly ignorant and illiterate world of mankind are willing to forget God, and ly buried in the dust of earthlinesss and carnality; but also the learned world, being the same way corrupted, do generally abuse their learning and parts, while not sanctified by grace, to the further overthrow of region, and increase of Atheism, by employing the noble faculties and reason that God has given them, not to the glory and honour of that God, but rather in mighty attempts to blot out, if possible, the remembrance of his name in the world, and bury it under the dust and rubbish of senses and phantasms: About which, rules of philosophy are now a days cited, as if they were rules of divinity; and as if the speculation of phantasms were any way concerned in, or helpful to the knowledge of God and Christ, in order to salvation: While yet most of these, and such like philosophical speculations, both ancient and modern, are but fruits and effects of God's wrath, against a learned Atheistical world, expressed *Rom.* i. 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28. *Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man.—Who changed the TRUTH of God into a lie*; that is, say some, either the God of Truth, or the true God, into an idol, which is a lie; or the true sentiments and notions they had of God, and were taught them, *vers.* 18, 19, 20. by the light of nature, and the book of the creature, these they changed into lying imaginations and conceits. *For this cause God gave them up to vile affections.—And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind*; or, as it is in the margin, *a mind void of judgment.* And some, because they received not the love of the truth, God sends them *strong delusions*, that they should *believe a lie*, 2 *Thess.* ii. 10, 11. How the foresaid rule about phantasms can suit the subject relating to the knowledge of God in Christ, may easily appear to any that consider, that there can be no greater opposites than these two, namely, the natural fancies or imaginations of man, and the knowledge of God and Christ. Mens proud thoughts, yea, natural reasonings and high imaginations, exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and cannot be overthrown, but by *the weapons that are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of these strong holds* of Satan, 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5. *The carnal mind or*

wisdom of the flesh, *is enmity against God*, Rom. viii. 7. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. If the very *wisdom* and understanding of the *wise and prudent of this world* must be destroyed, and brought to nothing, 1 *Cor.* i. 19, 20. to make way for the knowledge of God and Christ; it were strange, to think that notions and phantasms could be helpful to it.

Though the thought and impress of a Deity is natural to all, as hath been said, so as none can banish utterly from himself this thought, *That there is a God*; yet all have lost this knowledge of God, that was the glory of man in his creation. "The eye is born (says *Charnock*, *vol.* II. *p.* 442.) "quite blind to spiritual, but purblind only to natural know- "ledge. God, in his exact search in the world after its pol- "lution, found not a man but was as ignorant as he was "corrupt, *Psal.* xiv. 2, 3. And the Apostle expounds it "as a charge against the whole world, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, "*Rom.* iii. 9, 10, 11. We are no more born with the sa- "ving knowledge of God in our heads and hearts, than "with skill in philosophy and mathematicks; no, nor so "much; for we bring into the world a faculty capable "of them by ordinary instruction, but incapable of the o- "ther without special illumination. 'Tis as possible (says "the same author) to read the law in tables of stone, after "they are pounded to dust, as to read true notions of God "and Christ in lapsed nature, *Eph.* iv. 17, 18." *ibid. p.* 443. "This natural ignorance among men under the gospel is "wilful; many have no desire to know what they ought to "know of God, that their conscience may not press them "to do what they know.—That knowledge which is the or- "nament of the soul, they account the torment of their "conscience. —— The understanding and natural wisdom is "employed in any vile service, rather than inquiries after "God; and with more delight entertains a natural disco- "very, than a divine revelation. —— The natural notions "of God men are not willing naturally to cherish; they "would raze out the engraven letters: But, since they are "so deeply impressed, as not to be obliterated, they fill "the characters with dirt; keep them by unrighteousness "from being legible, that they may be secure in the practice "of their unworthy principles, *Rom.* i. 28. *They like not to* "*retain God in their knowledge.* —The imaginations which "lift up themselves against the knowledge of Christ, are the

"darlings;

" darlings; a mighty unwillingneſs to have them pull'd down, " and raz'd to the ground, 2 *Cor.* x. 5, 6."

As the ſame Author ſays elſewhere, that a man may be *theologically* knowing, and yet *ſpiritually* ignorant; ſo I may ſay, a man may be *philoſophically* knowing, and yet *theologically* ignorant. Though Mr. *Locke*'s philoſophy is not univerſally approven; yet many will acknowledge he was a learned philoſopher. But ſound divines will ſoon ſee how he bewray'd his ignorance of divinity, eſpecially in making no light, evidence or knowledge ſuperior to natural; which he makes threefold, *viz. ſenſitive*, *rational* and *intuitive*. By this laſt he means that whereby we know our own exiſtence, and which he calls ſelf-evidence. It is ſaid alſo in his book on *human underſtanding*, *p.* (*mihi*) 394. " Traditio- " nal revelation (and, by the by, we have no other) may " make one know propoſitions knowable alſo by reaſon; " but not with the ſame certainty that reaſon doth." And elſewhere he aſſerts, " That, to talk of any other light in the " mind, beſides that of ſelf-evidence, reaſon and ſenſe, is to put ourſelves in the dark." ——— On theſe accounts the learned and pious Profeſſor *Halyburton* examines and refutes his groſs opinion, (*Eſſay concerning the reaſon of faith*, *p.* 122. *&c.*) at conſiderable length. Mr. *Iſaac Chauncy*, in his *Catechiſm*, *p.* 252. to that queſtion, *Whence ariſeth infallibility of aſſurance?* Anſwers, *Only from infallible evidence; which is divine teſtimony, whence the demonſtration of the Spirit is more infallible, than all that ariſeth from ſenſe or reaſon*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 4. *Rom.* iii. 4. *Prov.* xxx. 6. 1 *John* v. 10. *Numb.* xxiii. 19. 1 *Sam.* xv. 29. *Heb.* vi. 18.

As Mr. *Locke* has the word of God, the ſacred oracles, ſtanding againſt his principles; ſo he ſeems ſometimes to glory in ſetting himſelf directly in oppoſition to ſound divines and philoſophers that have gone before him. I have not had occaſion to conſult Mr. *Henry Lee*, or any other that write againſt him directly, beſide the learned Profeſſor *Halyburton* above named. But, though none ought to follow the opinions of other men except in ſo far as ſound agreeable to the word of God; yet the producing examples from others, (as the learned *Toſſanus* ſays,) gives not only delight, but authority and credit to a man's diſcourſe. Therefore, beſide what I have ſaid, I give my judgment in oppoſition to the above aſſertions of Mr. *Locke*; in the words of ſome great authors. *Charnock*, on this head, may be the more noticed, that he is owned to be a great philoſopher, as well as a divine; and as remote from enthuſiaſm, as Mr. *Locke*;

Locke; yet how opposite to his unscriptural sentiments, may appear from *vol.* II. *p.* 435. "This teaching, *says he*, is by "the Spirit, *John* xiv. 17. 1 *John* ii. 27. who inwardly "presents the excellency of God and Christ to the under- "standing, as the word doth to the ear; and that not like "a flash of lightning, that gives a vanishing light, and leaves "us in a worse darkness than it found us; but he abides as "a Spirit of truth.—It is his demonstration; and therefore, "powerful, 1 *Cor.* ii, 4. and surer than any demonstration "by reason, by how much the teacher is above all the rea- "son in the world. It is the *Spirit* that *searches the deep* "*things of God*, 2 *Cor.* ii. 9, 10. mysteries above the ken "of corrupted reason, and hid in the secret place of the Most "High.———Since therefore this knowledge is a fruit of di- "vine teaching, and from an infinitely wise and infallible "teacher, the soul of a believer is more assured of the rea- "lity of it, than it is of its own life and being. He knows "by sense and reason that he lives; but the knowledge he "has of God and Christ, is by the Spirit, a principle infi- "nitely superior to both the other." To this purpose is that of the learned *Davenant, in Coloss. p.* 212. "No power "can do any thing against itself, or above itself. Human "understanding therefore by itself cannot believe; whence "it is necessary, that it be enlightened with a more power- "full light and a more powerful illumination. In this light "then, the understanding both conceives the proposition "which is believed, and at the same time sees the formal "*reason* why it should be believed: But this *reason* is no "*medium* or mean either demonstrative or scientifick; but "just the *divine authority*; for *faith infused* shews to the "*understanding* that doctrine which is believed, to have "come from God." Another great philosopher † says, "Hu- "man understanding hath not any medium by which it can "evidently know things that are supernatural; because they "have not a cause in nature, by which they can be known; "for so they would not be supernatural. Hence, no myste- "ries of faith are to nature evidently known, though yet "they are certain, firm, and infallible; because divine reve- "lation, by which they are known, is void of all error, and "cannot consist with falshood. Yea, *says he*, if the myste- "ries of faith could be evidently known by human under- "standing, then they might be known by infidels; nor would "faith be necessary; nor would it be the substance and evi- "dence of things not seen, but of things that are seen; con- "trary.

† *Hierebeerd, disp. p.* 170.

" trary to the nature and deſcription of faith, which God " himſelf has given in his holy word."

From all which it may appear, not only how vain, venomous and vitious that philoſophy is, which, miſimproving and miſapplying ſcholaſtick axioms and theorems, ſets up human ſenſe and natural reaſon againſt divine faith and revealed religion; but alſo how impertinently and abſurdly Mr. *Robe*'s philoſophical *rule* about the ſpeculation of phantaſms, is adduced upon ſuch a theological ſubject, as this of the knowledge of God and Chriſt; as if theſe were neceſſary and helpful to this knowledge. How oppoſite ſuch doctrine is to the word of God, and to the ſolid divinity and ſound philoſophy above quoted, readers may judge. Whatever truth that *rule* may import, as it relates to the natural knowledge of natural and corporeal things; yet it has no relation at all to objects of ſaving faith or ſpiritual knowledge, except ſuch a relation as darkneſs hath to light. But, leſt any think Mr. *Robe* is here miſrepreſented, I own, he ſeems to adduce that rule only in ſupport of his darling maxim about the neceſſity of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, unto the faith of his being God-man in one perſon, and ſo may be ſuppoſed to adduce it pertinently enough; becauſe here is a corporeal object, that cannot be known or conceived without a corporeal phantaſm. But this fancy of Chriſt as man, is indeed but a fancy, that pertains neither to the act nor the object of faith; for *as faith in God centers in his Deity; ſo faith in Chriſt centers in his perſon* †. And to form an imaginary idea of the manhood, is no idea at all of the perſon God-man; which, being a ſpiritual and ſupernatural object, cannot poſſibly be the object of an imaginary idea: For, ſeeing Chriſt as man is no perſon, and in his perſon no man, to have an imaginary idea of *God-man*, or of that perſon *as man*, is a mere contradiction, both to philoſophy and divinity, to reaſon and religion. And therefore, unleſs Mr. *Robe* were to ſhew, that the object of faith is a corporeal object, and that the glorious perſon of Chriſt is to be known by the help of corporeal phantaſms, the rule which he adopts, *viz. Oportet intelligentem phantaſmata ſpeculari*, muſt be quite overthrown, and an oppoſite one more ſuitable put in place of it, namely, *Oportet intelligentem phantaſmata ſupprimere, ſubvertere, ſubruere*; that, inſtead of gazing into the glaſs of images and airy phantaſms, where men can ſee nothing but ſhadows, they may look into the glaſs of goſpel-truths and divine revelation, where faith will find ſolid footing.

SECT.

† *Charnock, vol.* II. *p.* 1171.

SECT. IV.

I PROCEED now to offer remarks upon more of Mr. *Robe*'s letter. Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 34. "This is what we affirm, that we may "and should think upon Christ as man, and in his human "nature; and that we cannot think of him really, as he is God "and man without this, *(viz.* without an imaginary idea of "him as man:) And it is what, to my great surprise, both of "you deny;" (meaning Mr. *Fisher* and Mr. *Erskine.)*" *Answer.* It should be no surprise to any man, to hear, that, when we think of Christ really, as he is God-man in one person, our thoughts ought to be real and religious, not imaginary and idolatrous; that we ought not to think of him as an object of sense and fancy, a corporeal object, but believingly, as he is the object of faith; not viewing his human nature any other way, but as it subsists in his divine person: Which cannot be done by any imaginary idea. If Mr. *Fisher* and I thus see and think of Christ's human nature by faith and spiritual knowledge, we will not envy Mr. *Robe*'s sight of it by phantasms and imaginary ideas.

"The question, *says he, (ibid.)* between you and me, is "not, if we may think upon, and have an imaginary idea "of Jesus Christ as a mere man, or as man simply, to use "Mr. *Erskine*'s words; for this is agreed upon all hands, "we may not, *&c.*" *Answer.* What he here says is agreed on all hands, can never be agreed to by any that know what they are saying. An imaginary idea, as Mr. *Robe* says many times, hath no other object but what is merely corporeal: And therefore it is with abhorrence I repeat his words about an *imaginary idea of Jesus Christ*; which idea, according to himself, can make him think of no more but a mere human body; and consequently cannot conceive of so much as even a mere man; for a mere man is somewhat more than a mere body, or corporeal thing. Yet Mr. *Robe* says, we may not have an imaginary idea of Jesus Christ as a mere man. And thus he now makes something more than a mere man to be the object of that idea. If my reader have eyes in his head, he cannot miss to see here a heap of mere contradictions. Again, he says, in this same paragraph, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man is *sometimes* necessary, useful and profitable, to our right knowledge of him, and use-making of him as Mediator. If it be *sometimes* necessary, this seems to suppose it is not always so. But this is inconsistent with what he ordinarily says through his letter, that it is so absolutely necessa-

ry, that it is impossible to conceive of Christ aright without it. I may here also remark on the beginning of this paragraph of his, that, if an imaginary idea can conceive of Christ no other way, but at best as a mere man, or a man simply, and yet Mr. *Robe* owns *we may not* conceive of him so, that is, it is not lawful, but sinful; then he proves, to my hand, that all imaginary ideas of Christ as man are unlawful, and consequently useless and unprofitable: Which ought to be abhorred and abandoned by all that would believe in him, and make use of him as Mediator, God-man.

"The question, *says he*, (*ib.*) is not whether conceiving "of Jesus Christ, or having an imaginary idea of him as man, "be faith, or any part of faith; for this we never asserted "it to be, and we are agreed that it is not." *Remark.* (1.) Here Mr. *Robe* (as many times elsewhere) makes *conceiving of Christ* the same with *having an imaginary idea of him as man.* But these I utterly deny to be the same; for we may *conceive* Christ by faith to be what he truly is, namely God-man; which no imaginary idea can do. It cannot so much as conceive of his manhood, as it imports his being a rational, intellectual creature. Nay, that idea forms only in the mind but a false image of his true body, as true; because, as Mr. *Robe* himself elsewhere declares, that idea can have no object but what is corporeal. It can rise no higher, to judge of what is true or not true. This belongs to a superior faculty. (2.) Since Mr. *Robe* will have the object of his imaginary idea to be a part of the object of faith, why should he here be obliged to own this, that it is neither faith, nor any part of it; nay, not *objectively.* Why then, he seems to declare himself of my opinion unawares, though he be fighting against it; namely, *That that cannot be any part of the object of faith which is perceptible by every man's fancy*, &c. But yet this opinion he will oppose, because he cannot believe in a God-man without the fancy of a man, or of a human body; and yet this fancy, as it relates to this object, is no part of faith, either actively or objectively: Which seems to make him neither of my opinion, nor of his own. But of this more elsewhere.

In this same 34th *page* he pretends to open up an amazing scene in the following words: "Allow me (says he) then to "open up an extraordinary and amazing scene to the reader, "in presenting him with a few citations from some of our "principal divines, asserting all I have said, as the great, ne-"cessary and comfortable truths of the glorious gospel, and, "consequently, your opposite propositions, as false and he-"retical.—This may possibly let well-meaning people into

"your

" your management, and convince them how ready you are " to cast up the most sacred truths, to maintain your schism, " and may possibly prevent some being led into heresy by " your positions and reasonings." *Remark.* Sure something very extraordinary is to follow, and Mr. *Robe*'s opinion is to be confirmed to a demonstration; and our schism, heresy and falshood, must be exposed, and a swatch of Mr. *Robe*'s insight into the truths of the glorious gospel, by the consonancy of his doctrine with that of famous divines. What pity is it, if, notwithstanding all this confidence, his authorities fail him, so far as to make quite against him!

" The *first* I shall present you with, (says he, *p.* 35.), is a pas- " sage from the late learned and godly Mr. *Rutherford*'s let- " ters:——*I know God is casten (if I may speak so) in a sweet* " *mould and lovely image, in the person of that heaven's jewel the* " MAN CHRIST; *and that the steps of that steep ascent and stair* " *to the God-head, is the flesh of Christ, the new and living* " *way:* And there is footing for faith in that curious ark of " the HUMANITY: *Therein dwelleth the Godhead mar-* " *ried upon our humanity*, &c." These words of Mr. *Rutherford* Mr. *Robe* cites in opposition to mine, wherein I contended against his imaginary idea of Christ as man. And so strange is my antagonist's blindness, that he does not see how Mr. *Rutherford*'s words refute that imaginary doctrine as much as I do. I could seek no better witness against Mr. *Robe*'s mental image of Christ in the brain, than these very words he cites and marks with a different character, as favouring his imaginary notions. Mr. *Rutherford* says, *There is footing for faith in that curious ark of the humanity:* But does he say, there is footing for fancy or any imaginary idea? Nay, says he, *in that ark dwells the Godhead married upon our humanity.* It is plain, Mr. *Rutherford* here means the hypostatick union between the divine and human nature. And will Mr. *Robe* say, that this can be the object of an imaginary idea? or can he form in his head the image of an ark wherein the Godhead dwelleth? Nay, there is no footing here, as Mr. *Rutherford* says, but for faith. Again, what image can Mr. *Robe* form in his head of the steps of that stair to the Godhead, namely, the flesh of Christ, the new and living way? Is that new and living way consecrated through the vail of Christ's flesh, a corporeal object for an imaginary idea? or is Christ's human body that new and living way? Is not Christ, as God-man, Mediator, that new and living way? Can that which is declared to be footing for faith, be cited with judgment, as if it were a footing for fancy and imagi-

nary ideas? Indeed Mr. *Rutherford*'s words are more spiritual than that any of them can be the object of a corporeal or sensitive idea: Nay, they seem to transcend Mr. *Robe*'s intellectuals, as well as his corporeal powers; otherwise he would never have dreamed that his imaginary ideas had any footing here. Would he think I were speaking judiciously, if I should say, that he cannot believe that the flesh of Christ is a stair to the Godhead, without an imaginary idea of material steps of a stair; nor believe that the Godhead dwells in the curious ark of his humanity, without an imaginary idea of a material ark? With as little judgment does he suppose, that none can believe in Christ, the God-man, through whose flesh, or human nature, as a vail, the new and living way is consecrate, without an imaginary idea of material flesh, a material vail, and a human body. It is true, it may be alledged, the former are only metaphorick resemblances, but the body of Christ is a real body. It is so: But then, the things from which the metaphors are taken, namely, a stair and an ark, are material things, as well as flesh is a material thing; and they are all equally the object of an imaginary idea: And not one material or corporeal thing more than another, can be the proper object of faith, but only of sense and fancy. But it would seem Mr. *Robe* lays most stress upon Mr. *Rutherford*'s words which he puts forth in capital letters, when speaking of our Redeemer, and calling him the MAN CHRIST. But is it possible Mr. *Robe* can dream, that this was meant of Christ's human nature, or human body, as it is the object of an imaginary idea? when yet the words are about the *person* of that heavenly jewel, the *man Christ*; whose person, Mr. *Robe* owns, cannot be the object of any such idea. Yet he cites my words in opposition to Mr. *Rutherford*'s foresaid words, and then terms mine horrible propositions; adding, "How "do these agree with what he said, *That the steps of that steep* "*ascent and stair to the Godhead is the* flesh *of Christ, the* "*new and living way; and there is footing for faith in that cu-* "*rious ark of the humanity?* Is this to be a help or hinderance to faith? Is this to be no part of the object of faith? "How do they agree with what he says of casting his love "first upon the MAN CHRIST?" Here Mr. *Rutherford* adds the reason, which Mr. *Robe* does not, in the resuming thereof, namely, "I should see all the three blessed persons through "him." Which explain his Words quite away, yea infinitely remote from all Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary ideas; which still he thinks Mr. *Rutherford*'s words favour, because he designs our Redeemer, the *man Christ*. Hence Mr. *Robe* comes three times

over

over that title in big letters; therefore I must offer some remarks farther upon it.

Mr. *Robe* boasts of what he has advanced about an imaginary idea, as if it were somepart of the great, necessary and comfortable truth of the glorious gospel, and, consequently, my opinion false and heretical: Whereas indeed I never had such a swatch of a Minister's ignorance of the gospel, and ignorance of the meaning of his own words. Here notice, (1.) Mr. *Rutherford* speaks of *the man Christ*; but Mr. *Robe* speaks of *Christ as man*: And yet Mr. *Robe* fancies that Mr. *Rutherford* speaks as he does. But these two differ as much as heaven differs from earth, and God from man. This I shall make plain, I think, to the capacity of any child six years old. Christ being the name of a person, and particularly the person of our Redeemer God-man, the *man Christ is God*; but Christ *as man is not God:* The man Christ is a *person*; but Christ as man is no *person*. This I shall further make evident. The man Christ is the object of faith and adoration; but Christ as man is a creature, neither the object of faith nor worship. (1.) I here assert, That the *man Christ is God*; because the scripture declares, that our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so is God manifested in the flesh. (2.) I assert, *That Christ as man is not God*; which is as great a truth, as when I assert, that Christ *as God is not man*. Even so Christ as man is not God; because he hath two distinct natures, the divine and human, which cannot be confounded. (3.) I assert, That the *man Christ is a person*; because he who is the man Christ, is God, the second person of the glorious Trinity. (4.) I assert, *that Christ as man is not a person*; because, if he were a person as man, and a person as God also, he would have two persons: But he is God and man in two distinct natures and one person for ever. It is plain, the *man Christ* then is God: But Christ *as man* is not God, but a creature of the human kind; for Christ, the second *Adam*, was as truly made of a woman, as the woman at first was truly made of a man. It is plain also, the man Christ is a person; but Christ as man is no person, but a nature, not divine, but human. Hence it follows, that to have a natural conception and imaginary idea of Christ as man, is to conceive of a thing that is neither God nor a person, but a mere human creature, that is no person, no God. And, to make this the object of faith and worship, is gross idolatry. The man Christ is the anointed Son of God, the glorious Redeemer, the only object of saving faith: But Christ, as man, and the imaginary idea of him as man, being

ing an idea of his human body as such, this human body, as such, is the object of sense; and can no more in itself, or as such, be the object of faith, than any other human body can be.

How much then Mr. *Rutherford*'s doctrine differs from Mr. *Robe*'s, may be evident to all who read what Mr. *Robe* himself here cites; and how near to my doctrine, may be further evident from Mr. *Rutherford*'s words elsewhere, in a treatise of his upon *Matth.* ix. 27.—31. intitled, *The power and prevalency of faith and prayer*; where, *p.* 16. he says, "Every "man naturally born of a woman hath a personship of his "own, and subsisteth by himself: But God, assuming man's "nature, took the nature, but assumed not man's personship; "for then he behoved to lay aside his own personship, and "assume our person: But it was not good, that Christ should "lay aside any thing that he had from eternity. We had "need of his person in the mediation between God and us. "—It was the Godhead that only could make his blood to "be the blood of God, and perfume it with infinite merit." ——*p.* 17. "If Christ had kept both his own personality, and "also assumed ours, Christ should have been two persons, "two sons, two saviours.—— Now, man's nature subsisteth "personally with the nature of the Son of God in the subsist-"ence and personship of the Son of God." *p.* 18. "This is "the greatest wonder in heaven, (*Is.* xliii. 11. *I, even I am "the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour*; there is but "one,) That man is made the same I and person with God, "not formally, but in union. There is but one single I, "one personship between both the Godhead and the man-"hood; but that is a strong one."——*p.* 19. "Angels think "it their new heaven, 1 *Pet.* i. 12. above their old heaven, "to draw aside the curtain, and look in to this wonder of "glory.—— The essence and nature of God did not simply, "as nature, assume the manhood, for then should the Fa-"ther and Holy Ghost (which have the very same nature, "and no other, with the Son) have been incarnate; but the "nature, as personalized in the Son only, did assume our "nature." Mr. *Rutherford* here expresses the mystery of Christ's humanity, as I have done elsewhere in other words: And Mr. *Robe* may try, if there be any footing for fancy here; for, in the words he cited, Mr. *Rutherford* told him there was only footing for faith. May the dagon of fancy fall down headlong before the ark of God. It is said of Queen *Elisabeth*, that, passing the streets, and seeing some of her pictures hang for signs that were not made like her, she was angry, and

and caused them to be pulled down, and thrown into the fire (*Arrowsmith* on *John* i. *p.* 57.) The picture of Christ formed in the brain by an imaginary idea, is no ways like him; and therefore must be pulled down and destroyed.

"The second passage (says Mr. *Robe*, *p.* 36.) is from the learned *Charnock*; where, speaking of this very subject, imaginary ideas, *vol.* I. *p.* 124. shewing that we must by no means conceive of God under a human or corporeal shape, he saith, *We may indeed conceive of Christ as man, who hath in heaven the vestment of our nature, and is* Deus figuratus, *though we cannot conceive the Godhead under a human shape.*" *Remark.* This expression of *Charnock* seems to answer Mr. *Robe*'s purpose; yet in reality it does not, if these following things be considered. (1.) There is no word here of an imaginary idea of Christ as man; which idea can have nothing for its object but a human body; and so not even Christ as man, that is, his whole human nature; far less can it have Christ as God-man; of whom *Charnock* speaks under the name of *Deus figuratus*; that is, an incarnate God, or God in our nature, and so of the person of Christ denominate from his manhood, as all other divines use to do: And, though he speaks of Christ's human nature, or of Christ as man; yet it is not as that is the object of an imaginary idea, but as that man is a person, who hath in heaven the vestment of our nature. Thus the view *Charnock* hath of Christ as man, includes a view of his whole person; and so is a rational and scriptural view; which Mr. *Robe*'s is not. (2.) When *Charnock* says, *We may conceive of Christ as man, though we cannot conceive the Godhead under a human shape*; though it supposes we may, yea and cannot but conceive of his manhood under a human shape or form; yet it no way supposes that what we thus conceive under a human shape, is the object of faith: Nay, so far from this, that *Charnock* himself, in that discourse, shews, that all corporeal things are no other but the objects of sense and fancy. And hence, though he seems to go farther than some other philosophers, in giving Mr. *Robe* a handle to his imaginary doctrine, from his asserting, that our knowledge and thoughts of the most spiritual things is so much by the help of corporeal representations; yet it may be easily gathered from *Charnock*'s discourse, that the helpfulness he speaks of, is only objective, accidental and occasional, as *Hiereboord* and *De Vries* explain that point; which I have shewn elsewhere in this tract. Yet *Charnock* here is so far from supposing, that the fancy and imaginary notion of Christ under a human shape belongs to the object of faith,

or

or ſpiritual knowledge, that he plainly enough intimates, that it does not ſo much as belong to rational knowledge; and therefore ſays, *p.* 125. *That, though ſtill there will be ſome dregs of matter ſticking to our conceptions; yet we ſtill judge by arguments and reaſoning, what the things are we think of under theſe material images.* Then he cites *Nazianzen*, ſaying, "A corporeal image will follow us, as a ſhadow does the "body, while we are in the body, and ſurrounded with fleſh-"ly matter, *&c.* So that there is a natural inclination to fi-"gure nothing but under a corporeal notion, till, by an at-"tentive application of the mind and reaſon to the object "thought upon, we ſeparate that which is bodily from that "which is ſpiritual, *&c.*" And then concludes that paragraph, ſaying, *Therefore what is offered by our fancy, ſhould be purified by our reaſon.* To which I add, that what is offered by fancy, and reaſon ſhould be purified by *faith.* Now, from what *Charnock* ſays, it appears, that what Mr. *Robe* makes the object of his imaginary idea, is not the object of rational knowledge; far leſs is it the object of faith.

I ſhall help Mr. *Robe* to a paſſage in *Charnock* that ſeems much more to his purpoſe, than any citation he has taken from him, *vol.* II. *p.* 476. "There is alſo (ſays he) a diſ-"covery of God in the *face* of Chriſt. Since the divine na-"ture falls not under the perceptions of ſenſe, nor can be "immediately known in itſelf by the underſtandings of men, "it ſhines forth and ſparkles in the face of Chriſt, and diſ-"fuſes itſelf about the world. (Then he cites *Gerhard*, ſay-"ing,) By knowing Chriſt, who is man, we know God; "becauſe the human nature is perſonally aſſumed by the Son "of God. As he that ſees the body of a man, ſees the man "conſiſting of ſoul and body, becauſe the ſoul and body are "united together, and make one compoſition, though the "ſoul in itſelf be inviſible; ſo he that ſees the human na-"ture of Chriſt, is rightly ſaid to ſee God, becauſe the hu-"man and divine nature are perſonally united in Chriſt, "though the divinity in itſelf be inviſible. And indeed we "cannot conceive any other ſight and knowledge of God in "heaven, but in Chriſt. The viſion of Chriſt in his glori-"fied human nature, is a ſeeing of God face to face. So "that whoſoever ſees Chriſt with his bodily eyes, or with the "eyes of his mind, ſees God; he ſees and knows God, not "immediately and directly, but mediately and conſequently." I ſee no paſſage could have been ſo pat for Mr. *Robe* as this: And yet it will not quadrate with his doctrine, relating to the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, that is, of his human body; becauſe

because, when *Charnock* here speaks of seeing God in the face of Christ, he means the person of Christ, as he shews in the page preceeding; where also, speaking of *Philip*'s *ignorance* in saying, *John* xiv. 9. *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us*, implying, That the Father was to be seen with corporeal eyes, and of *Christ*'s *answer* with a reproof, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*, he adds," The Son hath " rendered the Father spiritually visible in his person; his ex- " cellency, majesty, and inexpressible kindness to man shine " forth in Christ as a lively and clear image, *&c.*——— " Christ God-man is the image of God.——His humanity " abstractly considered was no more the image of God, than " *Adam* was by creation: And he is so the image of God, " that whosoever hath seen him and known him, hath seen " and known the Father also: Which cannot be said of a " picture; for he that sees a picture, cannot be said to see " the object represented by the picture, which expresses on- " ly the outward figure, form and lineaments; (and thus far " only, I add, goes the imaginary idea;) but he is such an " image as represents the nature, features, attributes and in- " ward virtues of God. A picture is but a shadow; but Christ " is a substantial image of God; wherein the Divinity dwells " bodily, *Col.* ii. 9." There needs no plainer words against Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary doctrine: And yet more plain to me seem the same *Charnock*'s words, *p.* 498. " He that spiritually " knows the Son, knows the Father, *John* xiv. 9. not he " that sees Christ *corporeally*, for then the unbelieving Pha- " risees might be said to see the Father; nor he that seeth " Christ *intellectually*, for then mere Christian Notionalists " may be said to see the Father; but he that sees Christ *spi-* " *ritually*, with a *knowledge of faith*, knows the Father; for " the majesty and bounty of God shine in Christ as an exact " image." Here Mr. *Robe*'s corporeal and imaginary ideas, though he should take in intellectual ones to help them, are quite overturned by that learned author, who he thought would assist him.

Mr. *Robe* (*ibid.*) next cites Mr. *Durham*: But to as little purpose; for both *Charnock* and *Durham* speak of a rational conception, a rational and spiritual knowledge. But where will he get me a divine of common sense that speaks of an imaginary knowledge, or an imaginary idea of Christ as man? This is a new term brought into divinity; which I fear has a new principle under it, according to that maxim cited by *Hiereboord*, *p.* 220. *Qui fingit nova verba, simul nova dogmata fingit*; *Words and terms are brought in with new prin-*

ciples and opinions. It argues Mr. *Robe* hath neither thought of his own principles about imaginary ideas, nor the ſpirituality of Mr. *Durham*'s Doctrine, when he cites, as for his purpoſe, theſe words of *Durham*, namely, *That he who is man, is alſo God*, &c. Can he form in his mind or brain the image or picture of the man who is God, or of any of theſe propoſitions relating to the human nature of Chriſt, which he cites from *Durham* on the *Revelation*, in his *Letter*, *p.* 36, 37. And yet Mr. *Robe* has the confidence to ſay, *p.* 37. at the foot, " Can there be any thing more expreſly " oppoſite to all theſe heretical propoſitions you [Mr. *Fiſher*] and Mr. *Erskine* have advanced, to lead people to a " regardleſſneſs and neglect of the human nature of Jeſus " Chriſt?" It is ſtrange, if Mr. *Robe* would have us heretical, becauſe we allow the rational and, intellectual, and believing conception of Chriſt in his human nature, but not of his ſenſitive and imaginary conception. How vaſt is the odds between theſe two, even in conceiving any mere man upon earth? When we think of a man by our mere ſenſitive powers, or by an imaginary idea, then we have no other view of him but in his outward bodily form, and draw the picture of that in the brain: But, when we conceive of a man rationally, or by an intellectual idea, then we view him under intelligible conſiderations, as a perſon either endued with, or deſtitute of ſuch and ſuch graces, virtues, gifts, talents, offices, ſtations, employments, characters, arts, parts, learning, accompliſhments or endowments, relating to a rational creature of the human kind. Now, a rational knowledge and conception of Chriſt as man, belongs to religion; becauſe we cannot have a ſpiritual knowledge, if it be not rational: But a ſenſitive knowledge, or imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, belongs neither to reaſon nor religion, but only to ſenſe and fancy.

How judiciouſly Mr. *Robe* cites even the very laſt of his quotations from *Durham*, may be gueſſed, when theſe are the words, namely, *Faith would not only reſpect Chriſt ſimply as Interceſſor, but as an Interceſſor, who is man in our nature, who hath experience of our infirmities, and tender ſympathy towards us.* How can this be to his purpoſe, when the queſtion is not, Whether the perſon Chriſt in both natures, divine and human in one perſon, be the object of faith and ſpiritual conſideration? which all grant; but, Whether Chriſt's human nature, which Mr. *Robe* makes the object of fancy, can, in that reſpect, be the object of faith? which I deny, and have proven to be abſurd and abominable.

nable. The whole strain of his discourse seems to point at best toward this strange doctrine, *viz.* the making both the natures of Christ, divine and human, equal objects of faith and worship with his divine person. But it will soon appear to those that are judicious, that to make Christ's two distinct natures equally the objects of faith, as we do his person, is gross error and heterodoxy; and that to make them both equally the objects of worship, as we do his person, is gross ignorance and idolatry.

Mr. *Robe* boasts (*p.* 38.) of his having asserted that very truth all orthodox divines have asserted before him; and adds, *I shall forbear to adduce any more divines, unless a new call be for them.* I shall only here tell him, he can have no call to cite more, because he hath not yet cited one that makes for him; and therefore his work is to begin: And I should be content to allow him the use of my library, as well as his own, to try his hand, if he can adduce but one divine that ever used, in treating divinity, this one single expression, namely, *an imaginary idea of Christ as man*; for, till Mr. *Robe* used it, and this new imaginary work he is a promoter of, introduced it, I never heard nor read of it.

" Having then given (says he, *ibid.*) a fair state of the " question, and shewn my agreement and your disagreement " with the greatest and most orthodox, yea reforming di- " vines, I proceed to consider the arguments brought against " my positions; and shall begin with your's [Mr. *Fisher*'s] " as reason should, seeing you have a lasting claim to have " led Mr. *Erskine* and others into this pitiful scrape, *&c.*"

Answer. In regard Mr. *Robe* here takes it for granted that Mr. *Fisher* hath been a leader to some of us, in opposing Mr. *Robe*'s delusive work and imaginary doctrine, and brought us over to some new opinion we never had before, though I would reckon it my advantage, if even a little child should lead me in a right way, as it is said, *Isa.* xi. 6, yet I shall for once not only deny my reverend brother Mr. *Fisher* the honour of being my leader in this matter, but also demonstrate to Mr. *Robe*, that I was of the same principle, in opposition to his imaginary religion, as now I am, before ever I knew of such a man as Mr. *Fisher*. This I do, by relating some notes of a sermon I preached above twenty years ago, upon that text, *What think ye of Christ?* to which some that are now eminent favourers of this delusive work and imaginary doctrine, were then ear-witnesses. I cite the words as they are reprinted in the *London edition*, prefaced by the reverend Mr. *Bradbury*, vol. I. *p.* 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44.

" Hath *God revealed his Son In you?* Gal. i. 16. Have
" you seen the Son? He that sees the natural sun in the
" firmament, hath a thought of it suitable to the sight he
" hath thereof: But a man that hath been born blind,
" and never saw the light, he cannot have a right notion
" or thought of the sun, though you should speak never so
" much of the glory of it to him. I have heard of a man
" born blind, on whom a great deal of pains was taken to
" let him understand what a glorious creature the sun was,
" and what bright beams and rays it sends forth through all
" the world; but he was so far from having any right thoughts
" about it, that, after all the pains taken on him that was
" possible, he cries out, *O now!* (says he) *I know what it*
" *is; it is just like the sound of a trumpet.* Poor man! there
" was the best notion he could frame about it, for he ne-
" ver had eyes. So it is here, Sirs; we are all born blind,
" having no spiritual eyes, till God open the eyes of the
" understanding, and enlighten the mind in the knowledge
" of Christ. We may speak of his glory and excellency;
" but the best you make of him is, O he is like a very
" stately and majestick person as ever you saw or heard tell
" of! and so you form the image of a great man, sitting on
" a lofty throne, compassed about with so many sparkling
" attendants in fine robes; and what you have heard with
" your natural ears of any person, or seen with your natural
" eyes, or can conceive with your natural understanding or
" reason, helps you to, or furnishes you with materials for
" framing such a notion of him. But what is all this? It
" is nothing but an image in your own brain, a carnal fan-
" tastical thought. The true Christ is the image of the invisible
" God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, God-
" man in one person. Now, have you got a spiritual dis-
" cerning? for *the natural man receiveth not the things of*
" *the Spirit of God: they are foolishness to him; neither can*
" *he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*—
" This question then, *What think ye of Christ?* is a trial
" of our faith; which faith is the evidence of things not
" seen. We have no more faith, than an ox or a horse, if
" we believe no more than we see or feel.——— There
" is a threefold seeing or feeling that is to be separa-
" ted from believing. The *first* is a *corporeal* seeing or
" feeling. *Thomas* thought it a better way to believe Christ
" to be risen, by seeing and feeling him, than by running
" to the promises.——— But Christ tells him, that the best
" and most blessed way was contrary to that, *John* xx. 29.

" 2dly,

" 2*dly*, There is a *rational* seeing, that is to be separated " from believing. Though none can believe without the " exercise of their rational faculties spiritualized, and tho' " it be the highest reason to believe what God speaks; yet " to make natural reason the rule and ground of faith, is not " to believe at all, *&c.* 3*dly*, There is a *spiritual* seeing, " that is to be separated from faith. It is true, there is a spiri- " tual seeing of sanctified knowledge and understanding that " is essential to faith: There is no believing without this " seeing, *John* vi. 40. But there is a spiritual seeing of " experience, *&c.*" From what I then delivered in this manner, it is evident, that my principles, in opposition to Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary doctrine and ideal religion, are the very same that I maintained, when neither Mr. *Fisher* could be my *leader*, nor Mr. *Robe* my *antagonist*; and that it is only Mr. *Robe* himself that hath been led into the pitiful scrape of new doctrines and new delusions.

Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 38. " He never asserted, That an ima- " ginary idea of Christ as man, was or could be an imagi- " nary idea of that person who is God-man" *Remark.* If so, then he must own that the person who is God-man, and whose person hath no parts, being but one undivided per- son, is the only object of faith; and, consequently, the ob- ject of his imaginary idea, which cannot terminate on that person, can be no part of the object of faith. Therefore, whether he will or not, his assertion leads him to be of that very opinion of mine, which he charges with blasphemy. And, if he won't take with the charge, I have as little rea- son to do so.

He asserts, *p.* 39. as he does elsewhere, That he can never believe what he hath no idea or conception of; and, con- sequently, he cannot believe the glorified humanity of Christ in heaven, without forming an idea or representation of it, as he does of *Enoch* or *Elias*. I must say, the comparison is odious. The humanity of Christ, as I have shewed, is in such a situation, in our incarnate God, as to be beyond all natural conceptions; insomuch that we cannot conceive tru- ly and rightly of his human nature any other way than we conceive of his person, namely, by faith.

SECT. V.

Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 41. " To make an image of the second " Person, or of God, is indeed expressly forbidden: But to " forbid

" forbid to make a true image, would be to forbid an im-
" poſſibility; neither is it forbidden as groſs idolatry. To
" worſhip ſuch an image, is the idolatry forbidden. The
" making the image is forbidden upon another account. We
" do not charge the *Lutherans* with groſs idolatry, becauſe
" they make ſuch images, though we do the *Papiſts*, who
" worſhip them." *Remark.* Mr. *Robe* cannot free himſelf from the charge of groſs idolatry he here mentions; becauſe he not only allows the making in his mind an image of Chriſt's human nature, but he allows divine worſhip to be given to it; for he makes it a part of the object of faith, which faith is the leading and principal part of divine worſhip. So that here, upon the matter, he proves himſelf to be an idolater. He condemns not the *Lutherans* for being *image-makers*, but the *Papiſts* for being *image-worſhippers*. But, in the concern of religion, both the making and worſhipping of any graven image are expreſly forbidden in the ſecond commandment. And yet, if a mental image of Chriſt's human nature by an imaginary idea be allowed, as neceſſary to faith or believing, it would ſeem that a molten image is preferable to a mental image, and the *Popiſh* way moſt eligible. Why? Becauſe, according to the *Popiſh* argument, *Magis movent viſa, quàm audita*; *The ſeeing of things is more moving and affecting than the hearing of them.* Even ſo likewiſe, the ſight of the eye gives a clearer view, and more affecting knowledge of things, than any imaginary notion and mental image thereof. Thus the ſight of the ſun with the eye is a far better view, than when one ſhuts his eyes, and only perceives it in his fancy and imagination, or, when the ſun is abſent, and at midnight, he forms an image of it in his mind. In like manner, ſuppoſe two men come into a houſe, the one with a mask upon his face, and the other without any mask, the ſenſitive idea we have of the unmasked face, is much more plain and clear than the imaginative idea we have of the face behind the mask; which we can only imagine to be a face like that of ſome other man; but can have no ſuch clear notion of it, as of the other. All which proves, that mere corporeity, or a human body, can be better repreſented to the mind by an outward corporeal image ſet before the bodily eye, than it can be by any inward mental image, formed by the help of an imaginary idea; and, conſequently, may be ſuppoſed to be much more helpful than Mr. *Robe*'s internal imagery; which ought to be the more abominate, as it is the mother, the ſpring and ſource of the former: Yea, it is the root on which all the

groſs

gross idolatry in the world did grow, as I have hinted already. Hence *Charnock*, vol. I. *p.* 95. speaking of *Rom.* i. 21. 23. says, "They set up vain images of God in their fancy, before they set up idolatrous representations of him in "their temples." And, a few lines above, he says, "We "set that active power of imagination on work, and there "comes out a god, (*a calf*,) whom we own for a notion "of God.—— When holy *Agur* speaks of God, he cries out, "*That he had not the understanding of a man, nor the knowledge of the Holy*, Prov. xxx. 2, 3. (*What is his name, and "what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?* ver. 4.) He did "not think rationally of God, as man might at his first creation. There are as many carved images of God, as there "are minds of men, and as many monstrous shapes as these "corruptions, into which they would transform him." Then he shews how these vain imaginations relating to God, are worse than idolatry and Atheism, *p.* 96, 97. Gross idolatry in the Heathen world is not more owing to vain pictures of God in the imagination, than, in the Christian world, it is owing to vain images of Christ's human body in the brain; which so abuse the understanding, and darken the mind, as to mar all rational and intellectual views, and consequently all spiritual and believing contemplations of Christ's glorious person. But more of this subject will afterwards occur.

Mr. *Robe* (*p.* 42.) owns again, "it is impossible to have "any true imaginary idea of God. (But he says,) That to "assert that we cannot receive Christ, as offered in the gospel, without an imaginary conception of him as man, hath "a tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the "word, to a false Christ upon the imagination: This is what "you [Mr. *Fisher*] have not made the least essay to prove, "and what you shall never be able to do." *Remark.* One would think it is very easy to prove what Mr. *Robe* so boldly thinks can never be done. This I do by the following argument in common form.

To assert, That a man cannot believe in Christ without that which necessarily presents a false Christ to his imagination; hath a native tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the word, to a false Christ in the imagination. But to assert, That a man cannot believe in Christ without an imaginary conception or idea of him as man, is to assert that we cannot believe without that which necessarily presents a false Christ to the imagination. THEREFORE it follows, *That to assert we cannot believe in Christ as offered*

ed

ed in the Gospel, without an imaginary idea of him as man, hath a native tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the word, to a false Christ in the imagination. I know nothing Mr. *Robe* can deny here, but that part of the *minor*, which supposes that his imaginary idea of Christ as man, necessarily presents a false Christ to the imagination, and consequently hath a tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the word, to a false Christ in the imagination. Therefore I prove this by the following arguments.

(1.) The true Christ in the word is some other thing than a corporeal object: *But* an imaginary conception of Christ as man hath no other thing but a corporeal object. *Therefore* an imaginary conception of Christ as man hath a native tendency to lead people off from the true Christ in the word, to a false Christ in the imagination. Mr. *Robe* can neither deny the *major* nor the *minor*, if consistent with himself; and therefore the conclusion must hold.

(2.) The true Christ in the word is the person God man: But Christ represented in the imaginary conception as man, is not the person God-man. Therefore it follows, as above, that it leads to a false Christ in the imagination.

(3.) The true Christ held forth in the word, is exhibite there as a Prophet, Priest, and King: But no imaginary conception can have any offices or relations whatsoever for its object. Therefore it leads to a false Christ in the imagination.

(4.) The true Christ can be seen by *faith* no where but in the *word*: But an imaginary idea or conception cannot see him in the word; which is *spirit* and *truth*; the object only of rational knowledge and faith. Therefore that idea leads to a false Christ in the imagination.

(5.) The true Christ in the word is a whole Christ. The imaginary conception of him as man, is not a conceiving of a whole Christ, but of a mere human body. Therefore it leads to a false Christ in the imagination.

(6.) The true humanity of Christ in the word is a *divine humanity*, as *Augustine* expresses it; because the Word was made flesh, and is God in our nature: But the imaginary conception of Christ as man, can include nothing divine. Therefore an imaginary conception of Christ as man, hath a tendency to lead people off from the true Christ, and the true humanity of Christ, in the word, to a false Christ, and a false humanity, in the imagination.

Arguments to this purpose might be multiplied. But any one of these is sufficient to prove what Mr. *Robe* says is impossible.

possible. Yet he may suppose, his assertion stands good, because still, says he, it is true, that there is no thinking of Christ as man, or of his human nature, in the word, without an imaginary conception of him as man in the head; that is, there can neither be a rational nor religious apprehension of him as Redeemer God-man, without a sensitive and imaginative conception of him as man. This is as much as to say, Mr. *Robe* cannot believe such an one he is told of is a reasonable man, without an imaginary conception of him as man. But does that conception of him as a man belong either to the act of believing, or the object of that belief, namely, a *reasonable man as such?* Every one may see what confusion this is, and how the brutal and rational ideas are miserably blended. Can a man's intellectuals be seen with bodily organs? Faith comes by hearing; and, because a man cannot hear without ears, would it therefore be good sense to say, he cannot believe without ears? But, if he does not believe with his *ears*, but with his *heart*, it is ridiculous to say, he cannot believe without his ears. There is a vast difference between a man, *hearing* what he *believes*, and his *believing* what he *hears*. *Without his ears* he cannot *hear* what he believes; but yet *with his ears* he cannot *believe* what he hears. If he could believe *with his ears*, then it would be reasonable to say, he cannot believe *without them*. But, since he does not at all believe *with them*, to say, he cannot believe what he hears *without them*, is unreasonable; because he can as little believe *with them*. Even so one cannot believe in Christ as God-man, says Mr. *Robe*, without the imaginary idea of a man. But he can as little believe with it. Suppose none can believe without it, as an *attendant*; yet neither can any believe with it, as an *assistant*: Its *attendance* may be *unavoidable*, while flesh and spirit are together; but its *assistance* is *unavailable*, because all the knowledge that imaginary idea imports, is not spiritual, but carnal; and is not rational, but notional; and therefore hath in it no food nor footing for faith, but for fancy.

Again, *p.* 42. there follows a master-piece of dreadful doctrine. "It is possible, *says he*, to have an imaginary idea "of Christ in his human nature; and it is not possible that "we can think of the human nature of the true Christ in the "word, without a conception of him, or an idea of him in "the mind, by the help and assistance of that faculty called "the imagination; which is what is all alongst called an ima-"ginary idea. And this *(N. B.) is as true a Christ, as "Christ in the word; if it be an idea of him, as held forth*

" *in the word.* For instance: The true Christ is held forth " to us in that word, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. *For there is one God, and* " *one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" Then he cites *Flavel*; but as far from his purpose as East from West. But to what is said above I answer: Here is very strange language, and two very absurd and abominable suppositions. The *first* is, *That we may have an imaginary idea of Christ as held forth in the word.* Which is impossible, according to Mr. *Robe*'s own explication of that idea, unless Christ held forth in the word were nothing else but a corporeal object. If the *words* of Christ are *spirit* and *life*, *John* vi. 65. then his word is a spiritual object, and cannot be apprehended by corporeal, but spiritual powers. So that a man might as well say, he can see with his ears, and hear with his eyes, or see and hear with his hands and feet, as to say, he can apprehend Christ, as held forth in the word, by an imaginary idea. The word is the object of that knowledge and faith that can perceive *truths*, which are all spiritual things; but cannot be the object of that fancy that can perceive nothing but the images of things, which are all corporeal. 2*dly*, He supposes, yea, plainly asserts, *That the Christ perceived by an imaginary idea is as true a Christ, as Christ in the word; if it be an idea of him as held forth in the word.* I have shewed, that an imaginary idea of Christ as held forth in the word, is absurd and impossible; and now I am to shew, that the other expression is vile and abominable. And I have scarce patience to read such horrible doctrine, importing that a representation of Christ by an image of him in the brain of a man, is as true a Christ as the Christ represented in the word of God. How strangely must the man be attached to his imaginary notions, that makes the representation of Christ therein as true as the representation of him in the divine word? He makes his imaginary idea to give us as true a picture of Christ in the fancy, as the infallible truth of God gives us in the word. If so, then a corporeal Christ in the imagination is as truly the object of faith, as the true Christ, Immanuel God with us, is in the word; and so a Christ within us is as good as a Christ without us. Here is a wide door opened to dreadful *Enthusiasm* and damnable *Quakerism*. For, if the Christ we may see in the fancy, be as true a Christ as the Christ we read of in the word, then he is reckoned no other but a phantastical Christ, according to the dream of the old hereticks *Marcion* and *Valentinus*; whom *Tertullian* refutes in these words: *Si Christi caro phantastica, tum & omnia quæ per carnem gesta sunt, putativus habitus, putativus actus, imaginarius operator,*

imagi-

imaginaria opera: If the flesh of Christ be phantastick, then all things that he did in the flesh were so, a putative habit, a putative act, an imaginary worker, and imaginary works. It is true, Mr. *Robe* says, Christ hath a true and real body: But, if Christ in the fancy and imagination, be as true a Christ as Christ represented in the word, then a phantastick Christ is a true Christ. They that advance such strange doctrines, deserve the same name that *Tertullian* gave to the *Valentinians*, when he said, they were *imaginarii Christiani, imaginary Christians.* Mr. *Robe*'s language here seems to resemble the account we have of the *Cartesian* ideas of God, which the learned *Mastricht* refutes, *Gangræna, p.* 213.—216. They made their vicarious and representative idea to be truly the same with the thing represented, as it is objectively in the mind; and so are charged there, (1.) With making God and the idea of him to be one and the same; or, which is to the same purpose, making God to be the idea of himself; which is an open and most gross contradiction. (2.) With making the number of gods according to the number of ideas. And, (3.) With making (consequentially) that idea, if it be God, the object of worship and adoration; which wants nothing of the grossest idolatry, whereby every one were bound to adore his own idea of God. (4.) Since they assert, (as he proves from the words of *Wittichius,) That we have in our mind the idea of God, not indeed always actually present, but that we can* depromere ex nobis ipsis, *bring forth by or from ourselves that idea*; hence it will follow, that we can make a god to ourselves, and that out of ourselves. To this purpose speaks *Mastricht* on the foresaid subject. And it is easy to see how applicable all this is to Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine, making his imaginary Christ a real and true Christ, and as true a Christ as Christ in the word. We are sure, that Christ is the very same thing the word of faith declares him to be. But, if Christ as represented in whatever nature by any idea, and in his human nature by an imaginary idea, be as true a Christ, then the absurdities above mentioned will equally follow. (1.) That Christ and the imaginary idea of him are one and the same; or that Christ is an imaginary idea; which is dreadful. (2.) That, according to the number of imaginary ideas, such the number of Christs; that is, consequently there is no Christ at all; (as the same author, *ut supra*, argues from the supposition of more gods than one.) (3.) That the imaginary idea or image of Christ in the head is the object of faith and worship, and is to be deified and adored; which is the grossest idolatry. (4.) That every one can make a Christ to himself

out of his own head, whenever he pleases. I durst not speak in Mr. *Robe*'s strain, even of the most lively actings of saving faith, so as to say, Christ received by faith into the heart, is as true a Christ as Christ held forth in the word; because Christ in the word is the perfect object of faith, exhibite in the perfect rule and ground of faith: Whereas Christ in the heart is neither of these; because the most elevated and spiritual actings of faith are attended with too many of Mr. *Robe*'s vain imaginary ideas. Hence, no man can lawfully believe in a Christ as received into his heart, but as a Christ revealed in the word. *Christ dwells in the heart by faith*, Eph. iii. 17. that is, by faith in his word; where alone by that faith the believer sees the true Christ: But he cannot see him in his heart or affections, far less in his head or imaginations. Indeed a true believer may sometimes *feel* Christ *joyfully* in his heart, *after he hath believed*, *Eph.* i. 13. but he can never *see* him *believingly* there; for faith can see his perfect picture no where but in his word. No where else is the true Christ to be seen, as the object of faith, *Rom.* x. 6, 7, 8. *The righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above? Or, who shall descend into the deeps; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: That is the word of faith which we preach.* On which words the author of the sermon, intitled, *The best preservative against Popery*, hath these words following. " The inquiry is, How we may be " made partakers of Christ, and righteousness by him? Or, " How we may have him present with us? This, says the A- " postle, is done by the word of the gospel, which is preach- " ed, which is nigh unto us, in our mouths, and in our hearts. " No, say these men; we cannot understand how it should " be so; we do not find that it is so, that Christ is made " nigh unto us, present to us by this word: Wherefore we " will ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from above; " for we will make images of him in his glorious state in hea- " ven, and thereby he will be present to us, or nigh unto us; " and we will descend into the deep, to bring Christ up again " from the dead: And we will do it, by making first crucifixes, " and then images of his glorious resurrection, bringing him " again unto us from the dead. This shall be in the place " and room of that word of the gospel, which you pretend " to be alone useful and effectual unto these ends." *Morning Exercise, vol.* V. *p.* 223, 224. And a little above are these words: " Their minds being dark, carnal, and prone to su-

" perstition,

" perstition, as are the minds of all men by nature, they " would see nothing in the spiritual representation of him " (namely, Christ) in the gospel, that had any power on them, " or did in any measure affect them. In these images, by the " means of sight and imagination, they found that which did " really work upon their affections, and, as they thought, did " excite them unto the love of Christ." Here is the spring and root of all image-worship in the world, whether mental or external; none of which can give the representation of the true Christ, of whom we have only the true and spiritual representation in the word of the gospel. " Our understand- " ings are of such a low stature, (says *Burgess,*) that we must " climb up to the tree of life, the scriptures, to see Jesus. " They are the only ladder whereby we climb up." *Davenant* on *Col. p.* 317. says, " In things respecting religion, no- " thing is to be concluded upon without a sure foundation. " Now, that foundation is the word of God; for in this we " see whatever we see pertaining to salvation. He that thirsts " in any thing which he finds not here, that man sees not that " thing, but only dreaming, or in his sleep, thinks he sees." From what I have said it appears, that as, on the one hand, to speak of an imaginary idea of Christ as held forth in the word, is an expression irreconcileable with common philosophy, so, on the other hand, to say, that Christ in the imagination is as true a Christ as Christ in the word, is irreconcileable with sound divinity; yea, a most ignorant saying, and a gross falsehood. May God convince him of it, and save his readers from drinking in such delusion.

Mr. *Robe (p.* 43.) repeats his beloved proposition, *That we cannot think upon Christ really, as he is God and man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, or in his human nature.* But, in a few lines above, he makes this idea the same with the representation of Christ's human nature *on the understanding.* Where I must, (1.) Keep him in with his own bridle, that he confound not imaginative with rational and spiritual understanding; for he elsewhere declares, That *where the imagination ends, and goes as far as it can, understanding begins, or proceeds; and that nothing can be the object of imagination but what is corporeal.* Without spiritual understanding there is no faith, no believing; because we truly believe with our understanding. But, *without* an imaginary idea of Christ as man, it may be said we can believe, because we cannot believe *with* it; therefore, (2.) As I have demonstrated elsewhere, it is a direct falsehood and fallacy to say, we cannot think of Christ, or believe in him, as God-man, without that

that imaginary idea of him as man. Mr. *Robe* says it is impossible to believe *without* it. In opposition to which I assert, as above, it is impossible to believe *with* it. And therefore to say, he cannot believe without it, is equally childish with saying, though he hath a tongue to speak, yet he cannot speak without breath. True; nor can he breathe without air, nor can he breathe in the air without lungs and life; nor hath he life without heat, nor heat without fire: And so he cannot speak without some or all of the four elements, particularly, air and fire. Well, perhaps this is very true, in some sense; and yet a very trifle, unworthy of any that lay claim to solidity and judgment: But it would be agreeable enough, and a thing spoken with judgment, to say, I cannot speak *without* a tongue? Why? Because I can speak *with* it. Now, if Mr. *Robe* can believe with his imaginary ideas, then he is right to say, he cannot believe without it. But no true believer will envy him of that faith.

Again, *p.* 43. Mr. *Robe* complains of Mr. *Fisher*, as if "he "only proved, that we cannot have an imaginary idea of "Christ as God; wherein, he says, he still agrees with him: "And yet, says he, you cunningly draw in the conclusion, "as if you had been arguing all along against the possibility or "lawfulness of an imaginary idea of the human nature of "the lovely Jesus. This is not to act like an honest Pagan, "much less like what you give out yourself to be." *Remark.* Mr. *Fisher* may smile at this lash; if it appears further, from what I here write, that it is impossible and unlawful, yea atheistical and idolatrous, to have (what Mr. *Robe* calls) *an imaginary idea of the human nature of the lovely Jesus.* Indeed these very words appear, in my view, to smell rank of idolatry; as if the loveliness and beauty of Christ's human nature did consist in any thing perceptible by an imaginary idea: Whereas it is truly impossible to perceive the real and true loveliness of Christ, by any mere natural and unrenewed faculty The loveliness of Christ's human nature lies in its mysterious union with the divine nature in one and the same person; and therefore none *sees the King in his beauty, to whom it is not given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven,* Matth. xiii. 11. *Flesh and blood cannot reveal these things to us; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*; the natural imagination conceives them not. May God deliver his people from such a false faith, as does not shake off Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary ideas; which represents nothing of Christ, but the picture of a mere creature, *without any form or comeliness.* How vastly different from

from Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary doctrine on this head are the words of great Dr. *Owen*, on the *Spirit*, *p.* 152, 153. " That you " may not lavish away the actings of your souls upon a false " object, and think you love Christ, when you love only the " imagination of your own brain, consider his human nature, " as it was rendered beautiful and lovely by the work of " the Spirit of God upon it, before described. Do you love " him, because he was so full of grace and truth, so full of " holiness, because in him there was an all-fulness of the " graces of the Spirit of God, *&c.* If *you* can, and, on the " account thereof, do delight in him and love him, your " love is genuine and spiritual. But, if your love be merely " out of an apprehension of his being now glorious in heaven, " and there able to do you good or evil, it differs not much " from that of the Papists, whose love is much regulated in " its actings, by the good or bad painting of the images " whereby they represent him, *&c.*— There are three things " you are to consider to this purpose. (1.) The blessed u- " nion of his two natures in the same person. Herein he " is singular; God having taken that especial state on him, " which in no other thing or way had any consideration. " This therefore is to have a specialty in our divine love to " the person of Christ. (2.) The uncreated glories of his " divine nature; whence our love hath the same object " with that which we owe to God absolutely. (3.) That " perfection and fulness of grace which dwells in his hu- " man nature, as accommodated unto him by the Holy " Ghost; whereof we have treated. If you love the person " of Christ, it must be on these considerations: Which, while " some have neglected, they have doated on their own i- " maginations; and, while they have thought themselves " even sick of love for Christ, they have only languished " in their own fancies."

Mr. *Robe* proceeds, *p.* 43. to fall directly upon Mr. *Erskine*, " saying, " I now proceed to consider what the Reverend " Mr. *Ralph Erskine* hath said in this same argument, in his " forequoted appendix, from *p.* 48. *&c.* Here, *says he*, there " is a flood of words rolling hither and thither, without the " steady direction of art and reason. Here there is more of " the holy scripture perverted and profaned, than ever I saw " any where else in so little bounds. And here there is the " most cunning and sophistical dealing that hath been used " to cover and misrepresent the truth. I shall give in- " stances of all this." *Remark.* It is needless for me to notice these words, unless I were to render railing for rail-

ing.

ing. Whether there is truth in what he here says, will appear by examining the instances he gives. "*First*, (says he) notice, that he speaks of imaginary ideas, as if they were "the same with ideas of spiritual things. In the very title "page it is, *An appendix relating especially to imaginary ideas of spiritual things.* P. 147. *The subject of imaginary "ideas of spiritual things, Christ, heaven, or hell, represented "to the fancy, &c.* Hath he not been told again and again, "that corporeal, and not spiritual things, are the objects of "these ideas? *&c.* And I forbear to insist upon the nonsense "of *the image of spiritual things represented to the fancy*; "while we are speaking all along of the images or species re"presented to the understanding by the imagination." *Answer.* If there be any nonsense here in my words that he cites, he himself is the author of it; for, though I own, that imaginary ideas of spiritual things is what I myself here prove to be impossible; yet that way of speaking is owing to Mr. *Robe* himself, his making some things that are most spiritual, to be the objects of an imaginary idea, and some things that are corporeal, to be the objects of faith and spiritual knowledge. So that, when I speak of spiritual things as the objects of imaginary ideas, it is only the words whereby I represent Mr. *Robe*'s nonsense; who plainly is chargeable with this absurdity, notwithstanding all his solemn declarations to the contrary, and manifold descriptions of imaginary ideas, as having no spiritual, but only corporeal objects. This may be evident in a few sentences. Nothing but spiritual and invisible things are the objects of faith; nothing but corporeal and visible things are the objects of fancy, and of imaginary ideas. Yet Mr. *Robe* will make these things that are corporeal and visible to be the objects of faith: Therefore it is evident, he makes things that are spiritual, to be the object of an imaginary idea, or of fancy. If he denies, that he makes any thing corporeal, the object of faith, then he denies that the human body of Christ, as such, is the object of faith; because it may be the object of any man's fancy or imagination; and, if so, then he is either chargeable himself with the heresy and blasphemy he accused me of, in denying that that can be the object of faith properly that is the object of any man's fancy. If he does not take with this, then either he is chargeable with the nonsense of supposing the images of spiritual and invisible things, that are the objects of faith, to be represented to the fancy; or else he supposes, which is the same, and as great nonsense, that the object of faith may be the object of fancy, or the object

of

of fancy the object of faith; or that, contrary to scripture, faith is the evidence of things seen and visible, as well as of things not seen, or of things that are sensible, and can be fancied, as well as of things that properly are credible, and can be believed.

The truth relating to Christ's human body, *That he hath a true body; That he bare our sins in his own body on the tree; That he was put to death in the flesh, &c.* is matter of faith, as all other truths recorded in the word of God are. And thus Christ's human nature and body as represented in a *truth*, is part of the object of faith; for truth is no corporeal object, but a spiritual and intelligible thing. But Christ's human body itself, as it is the object of an imaginary idea, is a corporeal object; though, as it is the object of faith, it is a spiritual and inconceivable mystery, namely, humanity subsisting in the person of the Son of God. Therefore Mr. *Robe* proves, against himself, that he brings down spiritual things to be the objects of imaginary ideas; and turns them to corporeal objects. Mr. *Robe* says, he is speaking all along of *the images or species represented to the understanding by the imagination.* This he says in opposition to what he calls *the nonsense of the images of spiritual things represented to the fancy.* But, as I shew elsewhere, how far I disapprove of Mr. *Robe*'s philosophy herein; so these two he sets in opposition to each other, will be found to come to one and the same thing. For, if the human body of Christ, as it is the object of faith, must, as I have shewed, be a spiritual and invisible object, and yet, as it is the object of sense or fancy, must be a corporeal and visible object; then it is a fit expression of this nonsense of Mr. *Robe*'s, to call it the image of spiritual things represented to the fancy, or set up for the fancy to look at; which is all one with the species or images represented by the imagination (as he says) to the understanding: For, in this case, the objects of fancy must by some outward mean be first represented outwardly to the fancy or imagination, and then inwardly by the imagination to the understanding; for *outward things*, as he says, speaking of sensible signs, *p.* 10. *leave their species or image upon the imagination*; which is *ever afterward helpful to the other faculties*; (no doubt, he means especially the *understanding.*) But how little help it gives, and how much hurt it does to the understanding, to think upon spiritual and invisible things, that are the objects of faith, I had occasion to shew; and how even outward artificial images would do yet better, than these inward natural ones, were it not that no corporeal image whatsoever

can bear any likeneſs to him who is the image of the inviſible God. Beſides, to ſpeak of images preſented by the imagination to the underſtanding, to me, ſeems as great nonſenſe, (to uſe Mr *Robe*'s words,) as the former, in ſome reſpects: For, however the underſtanding works oft upon occaſion of corporeal images ſet before it, as they are things intelligible; yet images of corporeal things, as they are in themſelves, and in the abſtract, being among the number only of *ſenſibles*, are, as ſuch, objects that can only be preſented to the ſenſe or fancy; but cannot properly be the objects of rational underſtanding, until ſomething be ſuppoſed or aſſerted about them, that ſhall render them things intelligible, or that can be underſtood. And therefore Mr. *Robe* here ſeems, in my apprehenſion, to explain but one piece of nonſenſe by another.

SECT. VI.

Mr. *Robe* (*p.* 45.) falls upon my having aſſerted, that an imaginary idea of a crucified Chriſt is no better, than *a Popiſh crucifix, and mere mental idolatry.* I paſs what idle words he here writes about my only proof of this, its being, *I think*; but ſhall endeavour to prove what I ſaid to be truth. Only, before I do ſo, I muſt notice how Mr. *Robe* here ſeems to aſſert the lawfulneſs of making an *external image of Jeſus Chriſt*, alledging *Turretine* would have told me ſo, in his anſwer to a *Lutheran* Divine. If Mr. *Robe* had full confidence, that *Turretine* was on his ſide, I queſtion not but he would have cited volume and page, as he doth ſome others very little to his purpoſe. But, ſuppoſe *Turretine* (which yet is not the caſe) had been of *Lutheran* principles on this head, allowing images in churches; yet Mr. *Robe* ſhould have minded, that a greater than *Turretine* has ſaid, *What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* Many learned authors alſo write in oppoſition to what Mr. *Robe* here makes lawful; and, particularly, I know, the *Calviniſts*, writing againſt the *Lutheran* Divines about images in their temples, calling them *laicorum libri*, the books of the common people, or of the unlearned; they anſwer, "That they are no other books but "ſuch as God calls *Teachers of lies and of vanity*, *Hab.* ii. "18. *Zech.* x. 2." Thus the learned Profeſſor of divinity *Henricus Alting* †, "Concerning images in churches which are

† *Syllabus controverſiarum cum Lutheranis*, *p.* 94, 280. De imaginibus in templis, quæ tamen non coluntur, ſed tantùm inſerviunt memoriæ, &c

" are not worshipped; to the *Lutheran* apology, that they " serve only for the benefit of the memory, and outward " ornament; as there were images in *Solomon*'s temple, " answers: They ought not to be placed in churches, no " not for memory or ornament; *first*, because God com- " manded them to be abolished; *secondly*, because they " are incitements and instruments of idolatry; and so shew " a too evident appearance of evil. Of *Solomon*'s temple " there was another reason, seeing all things there were done " by the command of God, and the figures themselves were " types of spiritual things, which were to have their accom- " plishment in Christ." But, says Mr. *Robe* by the authority foresaid, *it is no more unlawful to make an external image of Jesus Christ, than to form an idea or image of him in our minds.* Indeed I think it, not strange to see promoters of mental and internal images, to be also favourers of external images of Christ: For, if a mental image of him be helpful to faith, surely an external image of him is helpful to an internal, as tending mightily to enliven the imagination. I doubt not but *Lutherans* and *Papists* both will reckon themselves very much obliged to Mr. *Robe*, for such concessions. But here I cannot but observe, that he speaks of *an external image of Jesus Christ*, and the lawfulness of making it, and also of the forming an image of *him* in our minds. An image of *him!* Of whom does he mean? Is it not of Jesus Christ? Why then he must here understand, contrary to what he seems before to assert, the *person* of Christ; unless he will say, that either the *image of Jesus Christ is not the image of a person*; or else *that Jesus Christ is not a person.* If he cannot say, that Jesus Christ is not a person, then how can he form the image of him, and yet not of a person? If he say, that it is not the image of his divine person, but of his human nature; then how can he draw the image of a human nature, and not of a person? since human nature can never be separated, either by thought or deed, from being a person, either human or divine. The image then of his human nature must either represent a human person, or a divine one. If *the image of Jesus Christ* he speaks of, represent a *human person*,

& externo ornatui; sicut erant imagines in templo Solomonis. *Resp.* De imaginibus non loquitur confessio. Quæ tamen ne quidem memoriæ aut ornatûs causâ ponendæ sunt in templis: tum quia Deus eas aboleri jussit; tum quia incitamenta sunt ac instrumenta idololatriæ; adeoque nimis evidentem mali speciem præbent. Templi Solomonici alia fuit ratio, ubi gesta omnia ex Dei præscripto, & ipsæ figuræ rerum spiritualium in Christo implendarum typi fuere.

then it is not the true image of Christ, who never had, and never was a human person; and so it conveys nothing but lies and falshoods. If the image of Christ he allows of, represents a *divine person*, then it is the image of God; for Jesus Christ is God, the second person of the glorious Trinity: And, consequently, whether Mr. *Robe* will or not, it is but an idolatrous picture of him who is God, expresly forbidden in the second command.

But, says Mr. *Robe*, (*ibid.*) "There is a great difference "between an external image, and a mental image: For a "mental image or imaginary idea, is absolutely necessary, "because we cannot conceive of any thing, without some "idea or shape formed in our minds." *Answer.* For my part, I know no difference between an external image, and a mental image, except the difference the scripture makes between the filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit; from which we are called to cleanse ourselves by the faith of the gospel-promise, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. And as far as filthiness of the spirit is worse and more hurtful, than that of the flesh in several respects; even so far is mental idolatry, or mental images of Christ, more subtily insnaring, and worse than external images, of which the internal are the spring and origin. But how can this be, says Mr. *Robe*, "when a mental image "is so absolutely necessary, that we cannot conceive of any "thing, without some shape formed in our mind?" This is false. For there is a way wherein we may conceive of God, as revealed in his word; and even Mr. *Robe* hath elsewhere said, we ought to make no shape or representation of him in our mind. But, since it is a corporeal shape or image of Christ in the mind that he must mean, this is a gross idolatrous way of conceiving of, and looking to him, who says, *Look to me, and be saved:——For I am God, and there is none else.* But he means *Christ as man.* Be it so: But then, Christ as man is not God. Though the man Christ be God, and therefore is the object of faith; yet Christ as man is not God; and therefore neither the object of faith nor worship. And hence that shape or image of him is not to be worshipped; otherwise we worship an idol of our own brain. Yea, hence I infer, that a mental image, instead of being absolutely necessary, is absolutely unlawful; because we cannot conceive of Christ, by the means thereof, without some corporeal shape of him formed in our mind.

Nay, but, says Mr. *Robe*, (*p.* 44. 45.) "this image is al-"ways accompanied with such a spirit of discretion, where-"by we separate that which is true, from that which is false, "that

"that there is no danger of idolatry." *Answer.* Here is some more very odd and abominable divinity.

First, he speaks of a *true* shape or image of Christ formed in our mind; whereas there is no true image of Christ that it is lawful for us to contemplate, but in the glass of the gospel, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. To contemplate an image of Christ formed in the brain, is to gaze upon an idol; and so to turn the mind from him who is *all,* to that which is *nothing*: *For we know,* says the Apostle, *that an idol is nothing in the world; and that there is none other God but one,* 1 *Cor.* viii. 4. That a mental image of Christ is an *idol,* is plain, from Mr. *Robe*'s own acknowledgment here, that, *if it were a false image,* there is danger of idolatry. But now, a mental image formed by an imaginary idea being, according to his own argument, an image of what is only *corporeal,* or some *bodily shape,* here is no representation either of the *glory of the Lord,* or of the *Lord of glory.* To call that image so, would be monstrous ignorance and blasphemy both.

2*dly,* He says, *this image is always accompanied with a spirit of discretion, whereby we separate that which is true, from that which is false, that there is no danger of idolatry.* I only want words to express what a proud and ignorant apology is here made for all mental idolaters, that actively form corporeal images or representations of Christ in their mind. For indeed true believers, when acting faith upon the true Christ, are rather passive than active, when a vain imaginary idea of Christ's human body intrudes itself upon them: Which makes them sometimes fear and tremble, lest they be worshipping but an idol of their own brain, instead of Christ. Such is their apprehension of the danger they are in of idolatry. But Mr. *Robe* thinks there is no danger of it. Why? *This image is always accompanied with such a spirit of discretion, whereby we separate that which is true, from that which is false.* I have proven, that there is no true image of Christ at all, but in the word; and that every image formed of him in the head by imagination, is false, and not the object of faith. Therefore such an image regarded and reverenced, is always accompanied with a spirit of *delusion,* instead of *discretion*; and strong delusion also, to believe lies: For, as I said above, God calls every such idol and image, a *teacher of lies.* Yet Mr. *Robe* seems to leave it to the *discretion* of every mental idolater to judge, whether the image he worships be true or false; and, if he suppose it to be a true one, there is no danger of idolatry. May God have mercy on a generation that hath such teachers of falsehood.

But,

But, says Mr. *Robe*, *(ibid.)* " External images, such as a cru-
" cifix, is a voluntary work, expressly forbidden of God, and
" attended with the greatest hazard of idolatry." He here seems to disapprove of external images, not of Christ; for these he seems to allow in the preceeding page, but such as a crucifix: And why? It is a *voluntary work expressly forbidden of God.* But doth not true philosophy teach, that mental images that arise from active ideas, are also voluntary? Hence the schools teach, *That the mind is sometimes active, and sometimes passive, in respect of imagination: That it is always passive in the perceiving of some ideas; but not so in the forming of them: And that, though sometimes it is passive in forming of some imaginary ideas, such as these that occur to men in dreams, when asleep, or in these that occur by the mere motion of the animal spirits, when awake, though yet the mind is averse from them, and no ways concurs to the production of them; yet the mind is active in respect of these phantasms which it excites in itself by volition, or a willing of inclination, to form in itself the idea of such a corporeal object. Which voluntary act is followed with a particular motion of the animal spirits, wherewith is connected that imaginative idea of the present object the mind seeks to behold, and of which it had before a sensitive idea when present by itself, or some corporeal thing representing it. In such cases the imagination is under the government of the will.* According to these philosophical principles, it will be found, that Mr. *Robe*'s mental image of Christ's human body is a voluntary work of imagery, as much as external images are; especially when he defends the same as lawful, yea, and absolutely necessary to faith. And yet such an image is as expressly forbidden in scripture, as the external image of a *crucifix*; which, Mr. *Robe* says, is *expressly forbidden.* No doubt it is so by necessary consequence; but yet there is no express scripture forbidding it in particular; whereas there are many scriptures expressly against mental images, or vain imaginations, *Rom.* i. 21. 2 *Cor.* x. 5. *Jer.* xiii. 10. and xvi. 12. *&c.* And therefore these are attended with the greatest hazard of idolatry.

But next follows Mr. *Robe*'s grand puzzling question, " Can
" you, or any man think of, explain, read, or hear the histo-
" ry of Christ's sufferings and death upon the cross, without
" an imaginary idea of a crucified Jesus, or Christ in his hu-
" man nature hanging, suffering, and dying upon the cross?
" Answer this (says he) directly, without silly and childish e-
" vasions. Can you have such an idea of him, without your
" imagination, and the actual exercise of it, presenting to your
under-

"understanding the figure of a cross. This is what all men "of sense will tell you." I answer, without needing to make any evasions, that it is a silly and childish question, which no man of sense could possibly propose with any air of gravity, unless he were become as void of sense and reason both, as to make the figure of a cross any part of the object of faith or worship. But, before I give a direct answer, for clearing this point, I premise what follows.

A human person is the subject of human actions. This human person acts by his human nature. The human nature, as it constitutes a person, consists of body and soul. Now, all the actions of the body or soul, while the union betwixt them subsists, are the actions of the person, as the subject thereof. While this subject thus consists of flesh and spirit, in some of his actions, because he hath a *body*, he may be said to act *sensitively*, as he is *flesh*; in other actions, the person, because he hath a *rational soul*, may be said to act *intellectually*, as he is *spirit*. By which soever of these ways he acts, whether as flesh or spirit, yet the person is the subject or agent.

Thus, the divine person of Christ, the Mediator, having two natures, since his incarnation, namely, the divine and the human nature, his human nature is neither a human person nor a divine person; for it is no person at all, but a nature. This divine and human nature of Christ constitutes one and the same divine person. This divine person is the subject of all his Mediatorial actions and passions. Whether he act, as *God*, by his divine nature or, as *man*, by his human, they are all the actions of this divine person. Thus, when it is said, Christ, as to his human nature, or as man, was born of a virgin; yet it was the divine person, Christ, Immanuel, God-man, that was born of a virgin. Christ as man was crucified; yet it was the person Christ that was crucified. Christ as man rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven; but Christ was the person or the subject rising and ascending. Whatever were his actions as man, they were the actions of the person God-man; he was the subject of all these actions. Every subject that is an agent, acts by its nature. All the actions then of Christ's human nature were the actions of his divine person: And whether they were the actions of Christ as man, or of Christ as God; yet they were all the actions of the same subject, the same divine person. Therefore, when Mr. *Robe* says, *Can any believe that Christ was born, crucified, dead, rose*, &c. *without an imaginary idea of him as man?* I answer, that these actions, as they are supposed to be the objects of an imaginary idea, or the objects of sense, are not conceived as the actions of that

divine

divine person Christ; for no sensitive or imaginative idea can conceive of them as they are the actions of a divine person; and only, as such, are they the objects of faith, and not of sense or imagination. The actions of a human nature, or of a human body, may be thought to be the object of an imaginary idea; and the actions of Christ's human body may be reckoned so, to any man that hath a notion of any mere human actions: But then, this is no more the object of faith, nor any part of that object, than the actions of any other men; (as Mr. *Robe* hath expressed it, though it must be of mere men that he speaks; for so all other men, besides Christ, are.) But the actions of the divine person of Christ cannot be objects of an imaginary idea; because the person, or subject of the actions, is not perceivable by any corporeal idea. The actions of other men are intelligible by mere natural ideas; because here they see both the action and the agent; they can conceive of the action, because they can conceive of the subject or person acting. But the actions of the divine person Christ, as such, are not perceivable by any merely natural, and far less imaginary ideas. They may indeed conceive of his actions as man: But, seeing, as man, he is neither God nor a person, what a gross absurdity and mere impossibility does that idea lead them unto; namely, to see an action without seeing an agent, to see a nature acting, and yet no person the actor, to see or conceive of a predicate without a subject? For the only subject or agent is the divine person of Christ, the God-man, whom they do not, and cannot see in that light. To this purpose *Davenant*, cites with approbation, these notable words of *T. Aquinas, quæst. disp. de Verbo, art.* 5. *Humanitas Christi est* instrumentum, *divinitas est* agens *principale in opere salutis nostræ adimplendo. The humanity of Christ is the instrument, the divinity is the principal agent in accomplishing the work of our salvation.* I only chuse rather to say, that the human nature is the *instrument*, and the divine person Immanuel, God-man, is the agent in this work †. Now, if the human nature is the instrument, and the divine person of Christ be the agent in the work of our redemption, the imaginary idea of Christ as man, and of his doing and suffering as man, separates the instrument of our redemption from the agent. Why, every action

† *Maccovii distinct. p.* 122. Christus, qua Deus, miracula edebat.—Dices, Quid ergo humana natura faciebat? *Resp.* Declarabat quid divina faceret: unde etiam humana Christi natura dicitur à theologis instrumentum miraculorum patrandorum; & instrumentum, non *physicum*, sed *morale*. Alii dicunt esse *signum* interveniens, ad cujus præsentiam Deus, sive divina natura, miracula edebat.

action and passion of his human nature derives all its virtue and efficacy from the person doing and suffering: And therefore no fancy of any of these actions or passions is any way profitable to salvation, or helpful to faith; because that imaginary idea (which is owned to have no other but a corporeal object) can conceive nothing of the personal glory of the agent, the doer or sufferer in our room and stead. In a word,

The imaginary idea of the man Christ is impossible; for the man Christ is God as well as man in one person. Therefore this imaginary idea of Christ as man, representeth to the mind no truth, but a lie: For, when by this men alledge they think upon Christ, they are under a gross delusion; for, as I have said, Christ as man is not God, nor a person either; and, consequently, the object of that idea is not the true Christ. True faith is founded upon the knowledge of truth, and it is strange doctrine that supposes we cannot believe in Christ without imagining a falshood.

Now to return to Mr. *Robe*'s question; it opens up the mystery of iniquity that lies in Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of Christ as man, without which, he says, we cannot believe in him as God-man; that is, without the imagination forming in the mind the figure of a man; nor believe in a crucified Christ, without forming in the mind the figure of a cross or crucifix. And yet these ideas of such carnal and corporeal objects belong no more to faith or believing, than light belongs to darkness, life to death, or earth to heaven. They belong to sense, to the sense of words, and the sense we have of corporeal things: But, to make them any way belong to faith, is nothing but ignorant idolatry. Indeed the figure of a man, which Mr. *Robe* will have immixed with the faith of a God-man, and the figure of a cross, which he makes necessary to the faith of a crucified Christ, are both equally idolatrous; because they are both equally corporeal figures, infinitely remote from the true object of faith. But here he brings in *Isaac Ambrose* against me, as he supposes, saying, "Thy Jesus was crowned "with thorns.—Thou art called to behold the man. Dost "thou see him? Is thy *imagination strong?*" (Which he writes in capital letters, as if it were a strong confutation.) *Answer.* When that author speaks of Christ Jesus, and of beholding the man, I have charity to believe, that he means the person, that is, the object of faith; and not the figure of a man, the object of sense and fancy: Also, that, when he speaks of the crown of thorns, a reed, and such like, he meant the many and great sufferings of the person Christ, the God-man; which

belongs to the object of faith, and not to an imaginary idea of a thorny crown, a reed, which are the objects of sense: And that, when he says, *Is thy imagination strong?* he means a sanctified imagination, including a spiritually enlightened understanding, capable of apprehending the proper object of faith. If these were not his meaning, and if he understood no more than what Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea imports, namely, these corporeal figures represented to the fancy, then, though he had been an angel of light, his doctrine was to be rejected as carnal, and not spiritual. I own, I would not chuse, on such a subject, to express myself in such words as these, *Is thy imagination strong?* both because I see no example for it in scripture, which never speaks so far, as I mind, except once, of imagination, with relation to spiritual or holy things, but always in another sense; and also, because the imagination may be strong, where yet there is no faith; yea, nothing but strong delusion.

But here again he cites *Charnock*, speaking of Christ's sufferings, and saying, "Here we may see the suffering of his "body, his pain upon the cross; and here *fancy* may work "about the inconceivable troubles of his soul; here fancy "may represent the piercing of his temples by the thorns, "and the dints made in his body." Though this way of speaking would never be my choice, for the reasons already mentioned, neither ought we to make any man's words our rule; yet I am persuaded, *Charnock* would never have expressed himself in such terms as these, if he had thought his words would have been interpreted, as Mr. *Robe* does, in favours of imaginary ideas of mere corporeal things; as if these would incorporate with saving faith. And it appears, as I said above, that *Charnock* here must understand some other thing by fancy, than Mr. *Robe* means by an imaginary idea; because he speaks of fancy working about the inconceivable troubles of Christ's soul; whereas Mr. *Robe* declares, *p.* 24. and elsewhere, that spiritual and inconceivable things are not the objects about which the imagination can be conversant. Thus, his authorities do him no service: And yet he boasts of them, saying, "Did these great men think, that an ima-"ginary idea of a crucified Christ is no better than a Popish "crucifix, and mental idolatry?" As I have no reason to question but these men thought the same way as I do; so I shall, before all be done, adduce authorities in abundance, to shew, that what I have said is the sentiments of all sound divines.

SECT. VII.

Sect. VII.

Mr. *Robe* (*p.* 46.) comes to what he calls my second argument; where, after he hath curtailed my words, he asserts, "That he never said, that an imaginary idea of Christ in his "human nature was faith, or included in it; but that we "cannot receive Christ as God-man without it. But, *says he*, "it will not follow, that, because it is not faith, therefore faith "may be without it; and that it is not necessarily required "in it." I have answered this already. Only, (1.) Since here he says again, that he never said as above; yet here he says it anew, upon the matter, by saying, that that imaginary idea is necessarily required in it: Which if it be not the same with its being necessarily included in it, let readers judge. How many times in his letter does he prove, that I had reason to think and say, that his imaginary idea was, according to him, included in faith? Does he not attempt to prove, *p.* 31. and elsewhere, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man is included in faith, if a right idea of him be included in it? For he makes three things necessary to the right conceiving of Christ, and the first of them is this imaginary idea. So that I did not wrong him, when I judged, that he made that idea of Christ as man, to be faith, or a part of it, or included in it: For what he said before, he says again and again; and yet, it seems, does not see, know or believe what he says. And little wonder where imaginary ideas lead the pen. (2.) Since he here says, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man is required in faith, he should have told us, by what law of God, or rule of right reason, it is required; since reason would rather seem to say, that, instead of corporeal ideas being required in spiritual actings of the soul, it is required, that they be extruded as hinderances thereunto. Since God has endued man *with reason*, and power of reflexion, by which he excells all the rest of the creatures, except angels, and which is that faculty of the soul whereby we judge of things, and distinguish good from evil, truth from falsehood, and *with understanding* to be conversant about intelligible things, considered as intelligible; it seems very disagreeable to that state and condition of man, to alledge, that it is *required* of him, or *necessarily required* in his actings, that, in matters which are intelligible, he should act sensitively, as brutes do, by sense and imagination terminating upon material objects, as they are material and corporeal: While yet it seems by the law of nature required of man, as a reasonable creature, that

he act rationally, by the exercise of reason and understanding, by which he is impowered to think upon matter, in a way that is above matter, or upon the material world of visible and corporeal things, in a way suitable to these intellectual powers God has given him. But to assert, that it is required of men, even in their moral and spiritual actings, or necessarily required in these actings, as if it were *a moral duty, that they form imaginary ideas of material incorporeal things*, which men natuarlly do in common with beasts, that are under no moral government; this seems to be a going quite out of the way of reason, as well as religion. Let us consider Mr. *Robe*'s proof: "Knowledge, *says he*, is necessary to faith: "We cannot receive Christ without it; and yet it is not "faith. It may be where faith is not, though faith can ne"ver be where it is not. And, if Mr. *Erskine*, and you, bro"ther *Fisher*, can take it up, the imaginary conception or "idea of Christ in his human nature belongs to the know"ledge of the object of faith, which is necessarily presuppo"sed to faith." Here is indeed a confused chaos; it is much if Mr. *Fisher* or I can take up the sense of it. I question, if Mr. *Robe* can take up the sense of it himself. Here he advances something that is true, and something that is false; but none of them to the purpose: I know not if he understands any of them.

(1.) It is true, that knowledge is necessary to faith, and properly is not faith: Yet in scripture faith is defined by knowledge, *Isa.* liii. 11. And some of our greatest divines have defined faith by a fiducial knowledge, and said, that faith is *seated in the understanding, in respect of its being and subsistence, and in the will and heart, in respect of its effectual working.* I am not sure, if Mr. *Robe* be acquaint with this doctrine. But, whatever truth is in his words here, it is no way to his purpose, unless he makes an imaginary idea of Christ as man, necessary to faith in the manner that knowledge is necessary to it. This he points at. Therefore,

(2.) It is a gross falshood that he asserts, when he says, that an imaginary idea of Christ in his human nature belongs to the knowledge of the object of faith. Which I prove to be false thus: The imaginary idea of Christ in his human nature is only the corporeal figure of a man in the brain; but the corporeal figure of a man in the brain belongs not to the knowledge of the object of faith: *Therefore* the imaginary idea of Christ in his human nature belongs not to the knowledge of the object of faith. The *first* of these propositions Mr. *Robe* cannot deny; for it is his own doctrine anent imaginary

ginary ideas, which respect only corporeal things. As for the *second*, That the corporeal figure of a man belongs not to the knowledge of the object of faith, this is plain; because the image and figure of a man in the brain is no knowledge at all, neither leads any way to the knowledge of Christ, as he is the object of faith: For the knowledge of the object of faith that is presupposed necessarily to faith, is a spiritual knowledge of the Son of God by saving illumination, *John* vi. 40. *He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life.* But the knowledge of Christ in his human nature by an imaginary idea, is no knowledge, not so much as of his human nature itself; but only the mental contemplation of the figure of his human body, according as the imagination sees fit to form it, or according to the measure of the *spirit of discretion that always accompanies the image*, as Mr. *Robe* said above. Here is a dagon that must fall before the ark of God. For, while it stands, it falsely figures the manhood, but truly disfigures the person of our Redeemer, God-man; who, being *God*, had a right of *propriety* to redeem his *creatures*, and, being *man*, a right of *propinquity* to redeem his *brethren*, and behoved to redeem them as he was God-man in one person; for the church was to be purchased by the blood of God. It was not the divinity alone, nor the humanity alone, that accomplished this work. Hence *Augustine* says, *Human divinity and divine humanity is the mediatrix between mere divinity and mere humanity.* And *Aquinas*, That *the humanity of Christ is the instrument, and the divinity the principal agent in this work.* Here then it may be inquired, Can either human divinity or divine humanity be the object of an imaginary idea? Or, can the agent in the work of our redemption (as I noticed elsewhere) be the object of that idea? If not, then what has faith ado with an image which is not the person God-man? The image of Christ as man belongs no more to the knowledge of the object of faith, than the image of a *mere man* belongs to the knowledge of an *incarnate God*; or the knowledge of a *visible* object belongs to the knowledge of a person *whom no man hath seen, nor can see*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Besides, to say, that an imaginary idea belongs to knowledge, is such a mock upon philosophy, as if one should say, that the corporeal or sensitive faculty belongs to the intellectual; which is to confound body and soul, animal and rational life: For the objects of mere imaginary ideas afford not materials for understanding, the subject here spoken of. *Locke* on *human understanding, p. (mihi)* 288. says, "He "that hath ideas of substances disagreeing with the real existence

" iſtence of things, ſo far wants the materials of true know-
" ledge in his underſtanding, and hath, inſtead thereof, chi-
" meras." Now, Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of Chriſt in his human nature, diſagreeing with the real exiſtence of it, is ſo far from belonging to the knowledge of the object of faith, that, according to the mind of that noted philoſopher, inſtead of having the materials of true knowledge in his underſtanding, he has nothing but chimeras. To which purpoſe the ſame author ſays, *p.* 205. " Phantaſtical or chimerical ideas, I call
" ſuch as have no foundation in nature, nor have any con-
" formity with that reality of being, to which they are tacit-
" ly referred, as to their archetypes." Alas! how much is goſpel-doctrine obſcured, when men bring in, inſtead of knowledge and faith, chimeras and fancies? Mr. *Robe* ſeems to renounce here the opinion of *Abelard*, who maintained, *that faith was nothing but a ſtrong fancy*, and yet proves himſelf in fact to be of that ſame opinion. And I wiſh none of the reſt of his opinions may be cleaving to him: For *Abelard* was condemned in a council held at *Rheims* and *Sens* in 1140, for making degrees in the Trinity with *Arius*, dividing Jeſus Chriſt with *Neſtorius*, preferring free-will to grace with *Pelagius*, and mixing his *Ariſtotelian* philoſophy with divinity; as Mr. *Robe* does his imaginary ideas.

Mr. *Robe (ibid.)* proceeds thus: *Some of the mediums or arguments he makes uſe of to prove that an imaginary idea of Chriſt is not faith, are horrid and heretical; ſuch as, that the human nature of Chriſt is no part of the object of faith, becauſe it is the object of the imagination and fancy.* Here Mr. *Robe* begins his heavy charge, but under a miſerably ignorant miſtake of my argument. If I had ſaid either directly or indirectly, that the human nature of Chriſt is no part of the object of faith, he might have been excuſed and apologized for: But I appeal to all the world that read my words, if they can bear ſuch a charge. My words, as he here cites them, are, *Can that be any part of the object of faith, which is perceptible by the fancy of every man, and is obvious to natural diſcerning?* Hence Mr. *Robe* deduces this, *That I make the human nature of Chriſt to be no part of the object of faith, becauſe it is the object of every man's fancy.* But my argument proves the quite contrary of what Mr. *Robe* aſſerts, namely, *That, becauſe the human nature of Chriſt, as it his human nature, ſubſiſting in the perſon of the Son of God, cannot be the object of every man's fancy, nor obvious to natural diſcerning*; therefore *that human nature of Chriſt is only the object of faith, and not of fancy, nor of*

any

any imaginary idea. Nay, that idea, instead of including the object of faith, includes no part of it. Every one that hears of Christ as man, must necessarily have the imaginary idea of *a man.* But is that imaginary idea of a man any part of the object of faith? No. Now, Mr. *Robe* must necessarily defend the opposite of what I assert; and so his principle must be, That *that which is perceptible by every man's fancy, and is obvious to natural discerning, is a part of the object of faith; or that the figure of a man, which he calls Christ presented to the mind by imagination, is a part of the object of faith.* If so, this is horrid indeed, and idolatry with a witness. Mr. *Robe* reads my words, as if I had said, *That the human nature of Christ is perceptible by the fancy of every man.* But I never said nor thought so. Nay, I think the human nature of Christ as it is the object of faith, is imperceptible and inconceivable any other way than by faith; and that an imaginary idea of it, is but an imaginary dream about a mystery that surmounts the conception of all mankind. An imaginary idea of Christ as man is no part of the object of faith; because, as I have already proven, *Christ as man is not God; and God only is the object of faith and worship.* It is true, Christ is God-man. But an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is no part of the knowledge or faith of his being God-man; because a God-man cannot be the object of any imaginary idea, but only of faith. But is not Christ's manhood or humanity a part of, or rather what relates to the object of faith? *Answer.* Not separately or apart from the divine person: And therefore it is no part of the object of faith as it is the object of fancy, or of any imaginary idea, because that fancy or idea cannot conceive of it any other way than separately or apart from the divine person; for this good reason, because it can conceive of no more than that which is corporeal. Yea, it is impossible, according to Mr. *Robe* himself, that an imaginary idea can conceive of any more. The object of it, then, is something corporeal, and *no more.* But that which is corporeal, and no more, is no part of the object of faith, any more than an image of wood and stone is. If it is needful to put this argument in form, it is thus: That which is nothing but a corporeal thing, cannot be the object of faith, or any part of it: *But* the object of an imaginary idea, according to Mr. *Robe* himself, is nothing but a corporeal thing; for nothing else, he frequently owns, can be the object thereof. *Therefore* that which is the object of an imaginary idea, or of any man's fancy, can-

not be the object of faith, or any part thereof. The human nature of Christ, as it is nothing but a corporeal thing, is neither the true human nature of Christ, nor the true object of faith, nor any part of it; for the true object of saving faith is only the person of Christ exhibite in the word, *Isa.* xlii. 1. *Heb.* i. 3. as he is that one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5.

Mr. *Robe*'s following words, *p.* 46. at the close, and *p.* 47. at the beginning, are, "Then he proceeds dreadfully to abuse "several scriptures (And then cites my words.) *Nothing vi-* "*sible, nothing corporeal, nothing sensible, can properly be* "*the object of that faith which is the evidence of things not* "*seen,* Heb. xi. i. *&c.* Where, *says he,* he evidently asserts "Christ's human nature to be no part of the object of faith, "and that it can be no part of it, because it is the object of "every man's fancy or imagination, now when it is absent; "because it is sensible, corporeal, visible. How dreadful is "this?" To which I answer, How dreadful is this ignorance of the man that hath delivered himself in these words, if it be considered,

1. That Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine must be necessarily the reverse of mine. Hence his principle is, That *something sensible, something corporeal, something visible, is properly the object of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen.* And, if this principle will hold either in common sense or divinity, I appeal to all the philosophers and divines in the world.

2. Mr. *Robe* says, that I here assert *Christ's human nature to be no part of the object of faith, nor can be so; because it is the object of every man's fancy and imagination, now when it is absent, because it is sensible, corporeal, visible.* He needed not have added, *now when it is absent*; for, though it were present to *sense*, I say the same, however dreadful Mr. *Robe* may think it, that nothing sensible, corporeal, or visible, can be the proper object of faith; because it is properly the object of sense. And, because sense, fancy and imagination in every man can easily conceive what is merely sensible, corporeal and visible; therefore what is thus conceived, can be no part of the object of faith; because the true human nature of Christ, as it is in him, cannot be the object of any such imaginary idea or fancy. Therefore I conclude it is only the object of faith, and not of fancy. This was my argument; which Mr. *Robe* would invert, by saying, that I evidently assert Christ's human nature to be no part of the object of faith; because it is the object of every man's fancy. Whereas I said the quite contrary, by a question importing the strongest negation, *Can that*

that be any part of the object of faith that is perceptible by every man's fancy? intimating, that the human nature of Christ, as it is perceptible by any man's fancy, cannot be any part of the object of faith: For, as it is the object of faith, it is quite imperceptible by any man's fancy; because it is humanity existing and subsisting only in the person of the Son of God. Fancy and imagination cannot conceive of humanity existing that way; and, when it is conceived any other way, it is no part of the object of faith. So that Mr. *Robe* ignorantly mistakes and misrepresents my argument, both by supposing, that I said the human nature of Christ is the object of every man's fancy, which I never thought, nor said either; and also by inferring, from this his own supposition, *viz.* That it may be the object of every man's fancy, that I deny it to be the object of faith. Whereas the direct contrary is the very import of my words, That, because it is not, and cannot be the object of fancy, it can only be the object of faith. But now, what must Mr. *Robe*'s principle on this head be, in opposition to mine? Namely, That *that which is perceptible by every man's fancy, and is obvious to natural discerning, is part of the object of saving faith.* Such a carnal principle is, in my opinion, directly cross to the mind of God, who says, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.*

However, Mr. *Robe* is confident he is right, and I am wrong; and therefore, after his terrible exclamation, saying, *How dreadful is this?* he brings in this digression *p.* 47. namely, "I have frequently said, since this schism began, it was so "groundless and unreasonable, I was afraid it would issue "in some heresy. And now alas! it seems to be broach-"ing." Hence I infer, that what he calls a schism, must be a very well-grounded and reasonable secession; since, in opposition to his fear, instead of issuing in heresy, it issues in a most necessary detection and discovery of the heresy, idolatry, and blasphemy that is involved in the new doctrine of the imaginary idea of Christ as man. And indeed, since the late delusive work began, it was so directly opposite to our covenanted principles in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and to any testimony lifted up for it, that there was ground and reason to fear, it would issue in gross error and heresy: Which, alas! is now broached, and published to the world with demonstrations of the greatest ignorance, advanced with the greatest confidence. And no wonder, when men *receive not the love of the truth, that God give them up to strong delusion, to believe lies*; and

ſuch lies are all mental images of Chriſt in his human nature, or imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man.

One would think, by what follows, Mr. *Robe* were convicted of his error in what he had advanced above, and were retracting his doctrine of imaginary ideas about Chriſt as man, in order to preach up Chriſt in his perſon, as the only object of faith: For his words are, " Only let the reader conſi- " der that a whole Chriſt *in* his perſon and both his na- " tures, is the object of faith, and offered to us in the go- " ſpel." And then he bids him hear Mr. *Charnock, vol.* II. ſaying, " It is not a faith ſimply in his God-head that is re- " quired by him, for ſo he is the object of faith in the ſame " manner as the Deity is; nor ſimply in his manhood, for " ſo he is no more the object of faith than another man may " be; but Chriſt in his perſon, God-man." Now, if Mr. *Robe* had ranſacked his library, to find out a refutation of his own error, and a confirmation of my aſſertion, in oppoſition to it, he could hardly have produced a better inſtance than this againſt himſelf, and for me: For it is, upon the matter, my very words, as delivered in the *Appendix*, which Mr. *Robe* pretends to quarrel and refute: For there I had ſaid, " That, in the " act of receiving Chriſt, as God-man, to have an imagi- " nary idea of him as man, is to believe, and not believe. " It is to receive the perſon of Chriſt, and yet to divide " the perſon. To receive the God-man, is faith; but to have " an imaginary idea of him as man, is not faith, but unbe- " lief; for, as man ſimply, he is not the object of faith, but " of ſenſe or fancy.——It is true, the two natures of Chriſt " are diſtinct; and ſo may be ſuppoſed to be the object of " diſtinct ideas. But neither the one nor the other *ſeparate-* " *ly* are the object of ſaving faith, but only the perſon God- " man." I am therefore obliged to Mr. *Robe* for the foreſaid citation from *Charnock*; which, in other words, is the very ſame thing with what I have here ſaid. And, at the ſame time, I defy Mr. *Robe*, or any man, to find the leaſt ſhadow for the doctrine of imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man, out of theſe words of *Charnock*, but the quite contrary: For not only does he ſhew therein, that the perſon of Chriſt, as God-man, is the only object of ſaving faith, but alſo ſeems to exclude, not merely the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, which cannot in nature be any other thing than the idea ſimply of his manhood, or rather of his human body; but alſo *Charnock* there allows not even the faith ſimply of his manhood, becauſe thus *he is no more the object of faith than another man may be*; inſomuch that here he refutes the doctrine of imaginary ideas with a witneſs, in declaring, that,

ſhould

should a man have the *faith*, let be the *fancy* of Christ's *manhood simply*, it is impossible that that faith could be saving faith, or any part of its object; because thus Christ is no more the object of faith than another man may be. And hence, unless Mr. *Robe* shall venture to say, that another man, as well as Christ, or another manhood, as well as his, may be a part of the object of saving faith, he stands refuted here by his own citations out of *Charnock*; whose words may stare his imaginary idea of Christ as man out of countenance: And all his ignorant arguments against me, are arguments against *Charnock*'s doctrine here. However, Mr. *Robe* cites *Flavel* next, saying, "He that does divest Christ of his humanity, or yet "takes him for a mere man, cannot receive him aright." To what purpose he cites, this I cannot understand, unless he think that saving faith, receiving Christ in his person, God-man, does but divest him of his human nature, without his imaginary idea of him as man. Whereas faith only can apprehend a whole Christ in his person, and both natures subsisting therein; while his imaginary idea, though it respects one part of Christ *notionally*, yet it cannot apprehend at all any part of him *really*; but in itself miserably divides the object of faith.

Mr. *Robe* proceeds thus: "That Christ as man simply (according to Mr. *Erskine*) is not the object of faith, "but of sense and fancy, does not in the least say, that his "human nature is not a part of the object of faith, as personally unite with his divine, tho' it be not the object of faith "simply in itself." Here again Mr. *Robe* confounds the object of faith and the object of fancy; as if the human nature of Christ, as personally unite with the divine, could be the object of fancy: Which because I deny it can be so, he imagines I deny it can be the object of faith. And hence also he is pleased to infer that I contradict myself; For, *says he*: "If Mr. "*Erskine* here contradict himself, it does not lessen the charge "of this gross error upon him, *That the human nature of* "*the glorious Mediator is no part of the object of faith.*" *Answer.* Here I must say, that, since Mr. *Robe* knows that I deny that the human nature of Christ, as it is the object of faith, can be the object of fancy or imagination; for him hence to infer, that I deny it to be the object of faith, is such an ignorant and absurd inference, that I defy the man to believe what he says to be truth, or to free his own conscience before God from the guilt of being a false witness against me; otherwise his attachment to imaginary delusions hath so blinded his judgment, that he is not capable to understand this argument, nor to take up the difference between faith and

fancy, or between the ſpiritual object of faith, though reſpecting Chriſt's humanity, and the corporeal object of ſenſe and fancy. But as it is impoſſible for him to anſwer to God for ſuch a falſe, ignorant and unaccountable charge againſt me; ſo I ſee ground to be glad, that I am reproached for the name of Chriſt, and for cleaving to the doctrine of faith, in oppoſition to the doctrine of fancy; and that the grand *accuſer of the brethren* hath not got ſuch a heavy charge laid againſt me, without diſcovering his cloven foot; I mean, without diſcovering his inſtruments to be of the ſame ſtamp with *Jannes* and *Jambres, that reſiſted the truth*; *men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*; or, as it is in the margin, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. *of no judgment concerning the faith*: And of whom it is ſaid, *verſe* 9. *They ſhall proceed no further*; *for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all men, as theirs alſo was.*

SECT. VIII.

Mr. *Robe* (*p.* 48.) cites two paſſages of mine, which he ignorantly ſuppoſes contradict one another, *p.* 47, 48. "That "part of Chriſt which is viſible, was the object of ſenſe on "earth, *&c.*" This he cites in oppoſition, and thinks is contradictory to what I ſaid before, namely, as he relates it, That "that part of Chriſt which is perceptible by the "fancy of every man, *&c.* cannot be any part of the object "of faith." The laſt citation here is not in my words, as they that compare, may ſee. But, allowing it to be ſo, "Is there not "here (ſays Mr. *Robe*) a contradiction in terms? Let Mr. "*Erskine* tell us, if that part of Chriſt that is viſible, and "was the object of ſenſe when he was upon the earth, was "not the object of faith then, as perſonally united to the "Son of God, and as the inviſible God was ſeen therein "and thereby? Was it not ſo to *Thomas? John* xx. 29. "Was it not ſo to all other believers who received him, "and believed on him then? How then can he ſay, that the "object of ſenſe cannot be the object of faith? *&c.*" To theſe, and a number of queſtions to this purpoſe, which diſcover only the ignorance of the queriſt, I anſwer, by aſſerting again what Mr. *Robe* thinks a contradiction, (though yet it is contradictory to nothing but to his imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man,) That *that part of Chriſt which is viſible, was the object of ſenſe on earth, is the object of viſion in heaven, and may be the object of any man's fancy and imagination*; *but never was nor ever will be the object of faith*, (nor any part of it,) *but as the inviſible God is ſeen therein and thereby.*

Mr.

Mr. *Robe*'s quarelling this, flows from his confounding the object of faith and the object of sense, and judging one and the same thing may be the object of both. Whereas that which is the object of sense, cannot, as such, be the object of faith; nor can that which is the object of faith, be, as such, the object of sense. The human nature of Christ, as it is the object of sense and fancy, is no more but the object of sense and fancy; and cannot, as such, be the object of faith: For faith can terminate upon no visible, sensible thing as such; for it is a *knowing of things that pass knowledge*, Eph. ii. 19. *and the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. Things seen are evident to sense; but faith makes evident things that are not seen. Again, the human nature of Christ, as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby, is the object of faith only, and cannot, as such, be the object of sense; for sense and imagination terminate upon things corporeal, and *look to the things that are seen*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 18. Mr. *Henry*, in his comment on that verse, *John* xx. 29. says, "*Thomas* as "a believer was truly blessed; but *rather blessed are they* "*that have not seen.* It is not meant of not seeing the *ob*"*jects of faith*; for these are invisible, *Heb.* xi. 1. 2 *Cor.* "iv. 18. but the *motives of faith*, Christ's miracles, and e"specially his resurrection. Blessed are they that see not these, "and yet believe in Christ."

Mr. *Robe*'s questions here, *p.* 48. are of such a nature, that I cannot conceive, how any man can propose them gravely, and yet be reckoned one that understands the gospel, or hath any tolerable uptaking either of philosophy or divinity; insomuch that it requires more patience than it does pains, to answer, and expose the ignorance of them. It is no wonder that Mr. *Robe* suppose that the humanity of Christ was the object of faith on earth, even as it was the object of sense then, when it was *present*, seeing he makes that humanity the object of faith, even as it is the object of fancy and imagination, now when it is *absent*. But to speak of an object of *faith* that is properly *visible*, is no better logick than to speak of an object of sight or *sense*, that is properly *invisible*. Yet Mr. *Robe*'s questions, which he thinks unanswerable here, are founded directly upon this absurdity, and import no more than what is contained in that common, yet ignorant maxim, *That seeing is believing*, or that sense is faith: For he supposes, that all who saw Christ in the *flesh*, saw some part of the proper object of faith; and that all who see that flesh in their imagination, do see also some part of the proper object of faith. But I plainly assert, That only those that saw

Christ

Christ by faith on earth, and none else, did see any part of the proper object of faith, even though they saw his human body; and that none of those that saw Christ only with the bodily eyes, and that saw no more but his human body, did ever see any part of the proper object of faith; because the proper object of faith is the invisible God. They saw not the true Christ, even when they saw the true body which he had, while they did not see him to be an incarnate God, the person God-man, nor see the glory of the invisible God in him and by him. When the wise men that came from the East inquired for him that was born King of the *Jews*, if they had worshipped the babe of *Bethlehem*, as he was a babe, they had been guilty of idolatry. " But, " when they fell down and worshipped him, (says Mr. *Hen-* " *ry* on the place,) we do not read that they gave such ho- " nour to *Herod*, though he was in the height of his Royal " grandeur: But to this babe they gave this honour, not on- " ly as to a King, for then they would have done the same " to *Herod*; but as to *a God: He is thy Lord, worship thou* " *him.*" Though they saw the babe; yet they had seen no part of the proper object of faith or worship, if they had not seen him to be *the Lord*, or *God in our nature*. A corporeal object, whether at hand, and present to the sense, or at a distance, yet present to fancy, is no part of the proper object of faith, in so far as it is the object of sense or fancy; for sense and imagination cannot behold it under that consideration that faith does. The unbelieving multitude that saw Christ's human body on earth, yet they saw no part of the object of faith, even though they saw Christ in the flesh with their natural eyes, as true believers did; yet the object of their sight was quite different. *Charnock*, vol. II. *p.* 73. quotes *John Goodwin*, saying, " The acts of a renewed man, and " the acts of a natural man, are the same in the nature of " acts. As, when a man loves God,— or loves man,— 'tis " the same act of love,— the same motions of the soul, the " same substantial acts simply considered.—— But the differ- " ence lies in the objects: The object of the one is super- " natural, the object of the other natural." Here is indeed a paradox; and I will be sorry if Mr. *Robe* be not able to read the riddle, namely, *The Jews that rejected Christ saw him, and yet did not see him.* The riddle is not mine, (any more than a number of mysteries I have mentioned elsewhere:) But the Spirit of God sees fit to make use of it no less than six times at least in scripture. Not only does the Apostle *Paul* borrow it, *Acts* xxviii. 26, 27. and *Rom.* xi. 8. from the Prophet

Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. vi. 9. but ſo do all the four Evangeliſts in the hiſtory of Chriſt, *Matth.* xiii. 14. *Mark* iv. 12. *Luke* viii. 10. and *John* xii. 40. intimating, that, in *ſeeing they did not ſee.* Thus they both ſaw Chriſt, and did not ſee him; that is, they ſaw the human nature of Chriſt as it was the object of ſenſe, but not as it was the object of faith. They ſaw the manhood of him who was the Meſſiah, the true Chriſt; but they did not ſee him to be the Chriſt, nor acknowledged him to be any thing elſe than what they ſaw with their eyes, a mere man. And ſo what they ſaw, was no part of the object of faith or worſhip at all, but of ſenſe. Hence, though it was owing to their blindneſs that they ſaw no more, yet, if they had worſhipped merely what they ſaw, they would have been guilty of groſs idolatry, or creature-worſhip; while they did not ſee him to be Chriſt, the God-man, nor ſee the inviſible God in him. Hence they *ſaw no form, nor comelineſs*, nor beauty *in him*, Iſa. liii. 2. Whereas, they that ſaw him by faith, *beheld his glory*, *John* i. 14. To whom it is ſaid, *Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee.* Why? *Matth.* xiii. 11. *Becauſe to you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given.* The ancient fathers proved Chriſt's Godhead againſt the *Arians*, from this, That he was the object of divine worſhip; and accounted them idolaters for worſhipping him thus, whom they did not eſteem to be God. Such idolaters would theſe have been who ſaw Chriſt in the fleſh, had they worſhipped him, without ſeeing and believing him to be God in our nature.

An object of ſenſe cannot as ſuch be an object of faith. The ſcripture hath ſet theſe two oppoſite to each other, *We walk by faith, not by ſight.* The foreſaid common phraſe, *That ſeeing is believing*, will not hold according to ſcripture, nor indeed to common ſenſe. Though believing is a kind of ſeeing in ſome reſpect; yet, when faith and ſight are contradiſtinguiſhed, they differ as much as ſeeing and not ſeeing. Therefore faith is called *the evidence of things not ſeen*; and of Chriſt it is ſaid, *In whom though now we ſee him not, yet believing, we rejoice.* If the object of faith were ſeen with the bodily eye, then it is no more faith, but ſight or ſenſe: Therefore that which is the proper object of ſenſe or ſenſation, outward or inward, cannot properly be the object of faith. True it is a man may, as frequently believers, have joy and peace in believing: He may have faith and ſenſible joy in the Lord at the ſame time; but yet, as thus, he may alſo have godly ſorrow and ſpiritual joy at the

ſame

ſame time, notwithſtanding his ſorrow is not joy, nor his joy ſorrow. And thus faith is not ſenſe, nor ſenſe faith. They differ many ways; particularly in their objects. The object of ſaving faith is Chriſt ſpeaking in the word; the object of ſpiritual ſenſe is Chriſt working in the heart. They differ as much as a word and a work; or as a word believed differs from a work experienced. Now, if the object of ſenſe, as ſuch, cannot properly be the object of faith, or any part of it, even in the moſt ſpiritual actings of believers, how can that be any part of the object of faith properly, which is perceptible by every man's fancy, and obvious to natural diſcerning? To deny this propoſition, ſeems to me a denying of common ſenſe; or at leaſt a denying of that which no man of letters, or acquaint with divinity, would do; and a confounding of faith and ſenſe: Which is too much done in the practice of Chriſtians; and there is little need of a doctrinal blending thereof.

What further pains Mr. *Robe* is at, *p.* 48. and 49. to prove contradiction and abſurdity upon my words, ſerves only to prove his own groſs darkneſs and ignorance about the object of faith. What? ſays he, *p.* 49. 42. "Was not "the bleſſed body of our dear Redeemer, when preſent to "the ſenſes of his believing diſciples upon the earth, ſen- "ſible, viſible, corporeal, perceptible and conceivable by "natural, carnal men, as much as by believers? And was "it not then as much *a part of the Mediator God-man*, and "the object of faith then, as it is now?" I have ſcarce patience to notice the ſeveral abſurdities that are here contained. Only,

(1.) I cannot bear without reluctancy, to hear of a part of the Mediator, God-man. This language diſcovers very groſs conceptions of the perſon of Chriſt; as if he conſiſted of ſeveral diſtinct parts, notwithſtanding his two diſtinct natures; and as if theſe were two diſtinct objects of faith, in believing on the Son of God. It is true, I had propoſed a queſtion, *Can that be ANY PART of the object of faith which is perceptible by the fancy of every man, and is obvious to natural diſcerning?* But, in regard it is not poſſible to have any imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, without parting the object of faith, or conceiving of the manhood in and by itſelf, diſtinct from the Godhead or divine perſon of Chriſt, the deſign of my queſtion, by way of ſimilitude to this groſs doctrine, which neceſſarily ſeparates and divides the object of faith, was, to expreſs myſelf by a ſtrong negation, that an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, was ſo far from

from apprehending the proper object of faith, that it did not so much as form a right conception of that human nature of Christ, which it necessarily separated from his person, and made the object of its contemplation. My question about no part of the object of faith, as above, might be understood in the same sense, as *Peter* said to *Simon* the sorcerer, *Thou hast no part in this matter*; or, as Christ said once to *Peter*, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* Our Lord, by having no part or portion in him, did not mean, as if he were divisible into parts; but that, if he do not wash a man, that man has no interest in him at all. Even so, when I said, *Can that be any part of the object of faith that is the object of every man's imaginary idea?* I meant, it is not at all the object of faith, nor in the least belongs to it. But I never intended, by that question, to suppose in the least, that the object of faith, as it respects the person of Christ, did consist of distinct parts. I was so far from any thought this way, that I argued against Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea on this ground, that it divided the person of Christ, the object of faith. However, upon the foresaid question misunderstood, Mr. *Robe* makes improvement, very suitable indeed to his imaginary idea of Christ as man, which necessarily divides the object of faith, by speaking of a part of the Mediator, God-man, and of that which is visible, corporeal, *&c.* being a part of him. I am almost ashamed to express what a gross notion is here imported, such as was never expressed before by any divine that I know of. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not made up of distinct parts, though he hath two distinct natures. Our Mediator is not two, but one, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* This one Mediator is neither two things, nor two persons; being, as some divines express it, both *unum* in the neuter gender, and *unus* in the masculine; that is, one thing, and one person. The two natures of Christ, though remaining for ever two distinct natures, yet are not two things subsisting distinctly in themselves; for the human nature never subsisted in itself, but always, since the incarnation of the Son of God, subsisted in his divine person: And the two natures of Christ were never two persons, but one existing in himself. Hence the schoolmen have proven, that Christ may be said to be *aliquid unum*, and *aliquis unus*; that is, one thing, and one person, having in his two natures only one subsistence and personality. Hence, though we can truly say, the man Christ is God, because we speak of a person; yet none can say, the human nature of Christ is God,

becauſe then we ſpeak not of the perſon, but of the aſſumed nature. And, though the three perſons of the glorious Trinity are truly called one God, becauſe of their one divine nature; yet Chriſt, though he hath two natures, cannot therefore be called two things, or two perſons; but one, becauſe of that oneneſs of ſubſiſtence and perſonality, which cannot allow a ſeparate conſideration of them, as if the Mediator conſiſted of different parts; or as if one thing relating to his perſon could be a part of the object of faith, and not another.

If the perſon aſſuming our nature and the nature aſſumed be one perſon, then the human nature with the eternal Word is one perſon. But, though Chriſt hath two natures in one perſon, yet neither is God nor man a part of the perſon; otherwiſe God the Son, before he aſſumed our nature, was not a compleat perſon, but grew ſo when the humanity was joined with the divinity. The perſon of Chriſt is not made up of God and man, as the whole is made up of parts; for thus the parts of any whole might be conſtitute of what was not before: But thus the divine and human nature in Chriſt are not united. This union is inexplicable, ſince the ground and reaſon of it is not the union of parts. For we may ſay, no part of that perſon is God; becauſe this perſon is not conſtitute of parts. The human nature is not a part of the perſon; becauſe the human nature is not God, nor a perſon. The divine nature in Chriſt cannot be called a part of his divine perſon, becauſe his divine perſon does not conſiſt of parts; and a perſon is no part of a perſon. Nor can the three perſons of the adorable Trinity be ſaid to be parts of the Trinity, tho' each of them is a diſtinct perſon of one and the ſame undivided Godhead: Whereas, if God were diviſible into parts, let it be ſpoken with holy fear and reverence, none of theſe parts would be God. But I am afraid of wading too deep into the ocean of this incomprehenſible myſtery, which tranſcends not only human, but all angelick and finite underſtanding; far leſs can any imaginary idea be of any uſe here. To conceive of the human nature of Chriſt as ſuch, without relation to the divine nature, unite with the human in one perſon, as the only, one, undivided ſubject of both theſe natures, is a conceiving of a part, where yet there are no parts: Which is a conception impoſſible, without the greateſt abſurdity. It is a conceiving of Chriſt as man; who, as ſuch, is not God; a conceiving of that which is not God, inſtead of conceiving of the man Jeſus Chriſt, who is God. It is a parting of that which hath no parts, a dividing

ding of that which is one, and whereof unity and individuality is an essential property, namely, the person of Christ, in which the two distinct natures are unite; not as two parts of that person, but two natures no otherwise subsisting but in that subject or person †. When this is the case, O! what a strange spirit hath prompted Mr. *Robe* to write so loosely as he does, about conceiving of Christ as man, even as we do of other men, and of a part of the Mediator, God-man: Which argues gross darkness on this subject, seeing there is no part of him can be lawfully viewed apart from another; otherwise it is not the object of faith, but of fancy and imagination, which sinfully parts what cannot be parted. Yet,

(2.) Mr. *Robe* speaks of "that part of the Mediator God-"man that was sensible, visible, corporeal, and perce-"ptible by natural carnal men, as well as by believers; and "was it not (says he) the object of faith then, as well as "now?" I answer, Neither then or now was it so; because they that take a parted or divided Christ, take nothing of him at all; and they only take him *truly* that take him *wholly*: Yea, true believers that saw Christ on earth, the visible and corporeal sight which they saw, was the object of their sense, and not of their faith, except in so far as they saw the *Word that was made flesh*, or God in our nature. The *Jews* that saw Christ, and yet *believed not*, as Christ says of them, what did they see? They could not be said to see the object of faith, nor any part of it, properly; for they saw nothing but a mere man, the object of sense, whom they took to be a human person, which he was not. Why, but it may be said, did not believers who saw the person, see also the man, and was it not the same man that believers and unbelievers saw; therefore they both saw that which was a part of the object of faith? *Answer.* They both saw the same man in a *physical* sense, or the same natural body of Christ, in which sense it was not properly the object of faith, to either believers or unbelievers, but the object of sense, or of mere bodily sight; but it was not the same man in a *theological* sense that they both saw, for they that saw him by faith, saw not mere humanity, but divinity clothed with humanity,

† *Davenant in Col. p.* 255. Disputatur à scholasticis, an hypostasis vel persona Christi post incarnationem sit composita. Hoc ab illis asseritur, non ratione *partium*, quasi persona Verbi composita sit ex natura humana & divina, tanquam ex partibus; sed ratione *numeri*, quia jam subsistit in duabus naturis, quæ ante incarnationem subsistebat solummodo in divina, &c.

or a man that was God, and whose human nature was not the object of faith and worship in itself, but because it subsisted in the person of the Son of God, and because the man was God incarnate, or God clothed with our flesh. The manhood thus viewed, was the object of faith and worship; but then in this view it was invisible to sense or reason, or any other eye but that of faith. Therefore what was merely visible to the natural eye, was properly no part of the object of faith, but of sense, to all onlookers. Hence our Lord denies that any *saw him*, who did not *see the Father*. While they saw the *man*, but not the *person*, they saw not the true Christ; yea they saw nothing of the object of faith. To see a man, is no part of the object of faith; that is what we see every day. The unbelieving *Jews* that saw Christ on earth, saw no more but a mere man like themselves, as we still do; and therefore they saw no part of the object of faith, but of sense. But to see a man who is also God, or human nature subsisting in the person of the Son of God, is to see the true Christ, and the true object of faith; whose humanity, thus considered, cannot be seen by the eye of sense or imagination, which only can apprehend the object of sense, and no more.

Again, as nothing invisible can be the object of sense, so nothing visible can properly be the object of faith, as it is visible and corporeal. Hence what Mr. *Robe* further advances here, *p.* 49. is very absurd, anent *carnal and natural men their discerning and conceiving propositions of the word.* I cannot understand how he brings in this here, unless he think that truths and propositions of the word are visible and corporeal things. Nay but, says he, they are conceived by their rational faculties. Why then, one would think he is off from the subject of imaginary ideas; for gospel-propositions cannot be the object thereof: But now he is on the subject of rational and intellectual ideas; which is a different theme: Yet I shall notice what he says. Speaking of propositions of the gospel, he adds, *Are not these the things of the Spirit of God, and the objects of faith, because natural carnal men can conceive and discern them rationally*, though *not spiritually?* Here Mr. *Robe* seems to be fighting with all his might against the word of God, which I cited, namely, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* There is wisdom

† He doth not say a carnal man [says *Charnock*, vol. II. *p.* 514.] but an animal, a souly man; he doth not speak of one led by the affections of

dom enough in this scripture to answer Mr. *Robe*'s folly. If all the things of God that the natural man conceives of, be foolishness to him, then can these things of God, as they are conceived by the natural man, belong to the object of faith? If so, then the object of faith would be foolishness. How monstrous and absurd this is, let any man consider. Besides, the Spirit of God says, *Neither can the natural man know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* In opposition to which, Mr. *Robe* seems to say, but they can know them *rationally*, though not spiritually. Well, but the Spirit of God does not honour that knowledge that comes by carnal reason in the natural man, with the name of knowledge at all; for, says God, *he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Dr. *Owen*, on the *Spirit*, *p.* 218. speaking on these words, says, "A power of receiving spi-"ritual things is denied [here of the natural man] *he cannot* "*know them*, he cannot *receive* them."—He grants, *p.* 219. "It is not the mere literal sense of doctrines and proposi-"tions of truth that is intended. For instance: *That Jesus* "*Christ was crucified*, is a proposition whose sense and im-"port any natural man may understand.—And in the due "investigation of this sense, and judging thereon concerning "truth and falshood, lies that use of *reason* in religious things, "which some would ignorantly confound with an ability of "discerning spiritual things in themselves, and their own pro-"per nature. This therefore is granted; but it is denied "that a *natural man* can receive the things themselves. "There is a wide difference between the mind's receiving do-"ctrines *notionally*, and its receiving the things taught in them "*really*:—For really, saith our Apostle, they cannot, *&c.*" And afterwards, *p.* 221. "This power to receive spiritual "things, must be spiritual and supernatural, *&c.*" Spiritual things cannot be seen but with spiritual eyes. *Charnock*, *vol.* I. *p.* 4. says, "Faith indeed is properly of things above "reason, purely depending upon revelation. What can be "demonstrate by natural light, is not so properly the ob-"ject of faith." Can Mr. *Robe* think that author whom he quotes so much, is of his mind, that the object even of sense and fancy is the object of faith? Nay, says *Charnock*, *ibid.* *p.* 342. "The gospel is a mystery, and mysteries surmount "human reason." But, says Mr. *Robe*, *ibid.* "Cannot the "same

of the flesh, but those men that are led by flashy reason, and by the common estimated wisdom and principles of the world, and order their lives according to the rational dictates of the world; such an one *receives not the things of the Spirit of God*, &c.

"same things be the object of, or discovered to us by both "reason and revelation, as the creation of the world, and "many other things?" Here also he proposes to shew how he, *viz.* Mr. *Erskine*, advances, "what never man of sense "or reason advanced before, —— That the same thing can-"not be the object of sense, of reason, and of faith." Now, though Mr. *Robe* here seems to be straying from the purpose in hand, relating either to the object of imaginary ideas, or of saving faith; yet it is to my purpose, to acquaint him, that, though *sense*, *reason*, and *faith* may be conversant about the same objects *materially*; yet what is the object of one of these faculties, cannot be the object of the other *formally* or *properly*.

This distinction, (that I may put in order what Mr. *Robe* speaks of so confusedly); this distinction, I say, betwixt things considered *materially* and *formally*, is almost natural to all mankind, even those that never learned any school-logick. The work of a watch *materially* considered is only so many pieces of brass or matter, that is the object of any man's *sense* of seeing or feeling; but, *formally* considered in its artful composure, and how the spring influences the cross motions of all the wheels, and these influence the exact motion of the pointer to the hour, in this respect, it is the object of *reason* or rational reflexion; and it requires some natural understanding and judgment to apprehend these materials in their order, connexion, relation to, and influence upon each other. Thus the mater and form are herein objects of different faculties. *Materially* considered, it is the object of sense, so as a sucking child, that wants the exercise of reason, can see, and handle, and play with it. But, *formally* considered, as a piece of curious art and mechanism, it is an object of natural knowledge and rational consideration. That which is the object of sense, or is seen merely by the eye of the body, is not the formal object that is seen by the eye of reason; and that which is the proper object of the eye of reason, is not the proper and formal object that is seen by the eye of sense.

Thus sense, reason and faith differ. The eye of sense sees things materially and corporeally: The eye of *reason* may see the same things; not in the same manner, but formally, or under some rational consideration. But the eye of *faith* sees not these things that are objects of sense and reason; it sees them not, I say, under any sensible or merely rational consideration properly, but in another light, *viz.* as they are put into the form of truths, propositions, records or testimonies, human or divine. Hence the objects seen by the eye of sense, are

are properly no part of the object seen by the eye of reason; and the objects of reason are no part of the proper object of faith: And consequently that which is the proper object of faith, is no part of the proper object of sense or imagination, nor even of mere natural reason. These there may be expressed in the words, sensation, reflexion, faith. The first relates to outward corporeal objects, to be seen outwardly by sense, or inwardly by imagination. The second relates to objects considered intellectually, and under intelligible considerations, or to be viewed by reason and rational deductions. The third relates to neither of these properly, but to things as they are revealed and laid out, upon sufficient grounds of credibility, to be the objects of faith.

Whatever then be the subject-matter, if it be such as sense, reason, and faith can all have some concern in; then sense looks to it in a *corporeal* way, reason in a *discursive* way, but saving and divine faith in a *spiritual* and *supernatural* way; so as it cannot be the object of faith, as it is the object of sense, nor as it is the object of mere natural reason. Thus, that which is visible, sensible and corporeal in Christ's human nature, which Mr. *Robe* makes the object of his imaginary idea, and would also warp in to be the object of faith; yet as it is the the object of sense and imagination, cannot be the formal nor proper object of faith, which conceives of it as sense and imagination cannot do, namely, not in a *corporeal* or *natural* way, but in a *spiritual* and *supernatural* manner; while it apprehends Christ's whole human nature, soul and body subsisting, not *physically* or *naturally* in itself, like other men, but *hyperphysically* and *supernaturally* in the divine person of the son of God, *God manifested in the flesh*, by an ineffable mystery.

This much is necessary in answer to these bold words of Mr. *Robe*'s in this same 49th *page*, where he alledges, *I advance what never man of sense or reason advanced before, That the same thing cannot be the object of sense, of reason, and of faith.* I have shewed, both how it can be, and how it cannot be; while he hath left his reader to confound all these together, and so to make no difference between faith and fancy, religion and reason; nor consequently, between devotion and delusion.

Sect. IX.

Here Mr. *Robe* proceeds, *p.* 49. to speak of the scripture, which, he says, I abuse, torture and wrest. A very heavy accusation

cusation, if it be true, without telling here what these scriptures are. He says, "he will answer me in the words of "*Arnoldus* upon *John* xx. 27." I would be loth to say of *Arnoldus*'s *Lux in tenebris*, as some foreign divines, calling it *tenebræ in luce*. I am of quite another mind, even though I think the passage Mr *Robe* cites and translates *for* him, casts not very much light upon the text in his answer to the objection, *How it can be said, because thou hast seen me*, Thomas, *thou hast believed*, seeing *faith is the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. and according to *Augustine*, What is faith? *To believe what thou dost not see.* Though what he says in answer hereto, is much more prolix and obscure than *Pool*, *Henry*, *Marlorat*, and others upon that text and context, clearly shewing the difference between the proper objects of faith, that are invisible, and all the objects of sense; and how the Lord Jesus here condescends to accommodate himself to *Thomas*'s fancy; not to make sense the ground of his faith, which cannot be; but to confirm the little faith he had, and reprove his unbelief, in waiting to found his belief upon the evidence of sense; which is properly no believing, (says *Pool*,) otherwise than sense confirms what we have before received upon divine revelation: Yet I see no word that *Arnold* hath in this place, that any way disagrees with what I have said, but rather establishes it, namely, that some things may be the object of sense in one respect, and the object of faith in another; but that they can never be the objects of faith in that respect wherein they are the objects of sense; and that things which may be known both by faith and sense, can never be the objects of faith properly, as they are known by sense. Thus the human body of Christ on earth, though it was in some respects both the object of faith and sense; yet, as it was the object of sense, whether to believers or unbelievers, was never the object of faith properly; because it could never be the object of faith and worship properly and formally, but as the invisible God was seen therein and thereby; in which respect it was never the object of sense nor imagination. So that any who please to compare *Arnold*'s words and mine, will see them holding with the sense I put upon the text, *Heb.* xi. 1. *That faith is the evidence of things not seen*; that the proper objects of it are invisible. And it will be found, that the faith Mr. *Robe* pleads for, is no faith at all, but sense or fancy, when he makes it to have properly a visible object.

Mr. *Robe*, (*p.* 50.) seems to own that carnal conceptions of Christ are contrary to faith, and that the scriptures I mentioned

oned, were but slily brought in to prove that: But none of them proves (he says) what he confidently affirms, that an idea of Christ in the understanding, by the help of imagination, is carnal and fleshly. Where, also he thinks, my words bear, that a *carnal notion* of Christ's flesh and blood, or human body, and an *imaginary idea* thereof, were the same things. And he here does not wrong me; for I own, I do make them one and the same thing. But he thinks I do so without the least proof; and that thus I endeavour to impose upon the unskilful and unwary reader. I do affirm indeed, That an idea of Christ in the mind, by the help of the imagination, is carnal and fleshly; and I think by this time I have proved it both by scripture and reason; and, by Mr. *Robe*'s own acknowledgment, that his imaginary idea can have no other object but what is carnal, fleshly, and corporeal. I do affirm also, That an imaginary idea of Christ's flesh and blood and human body, and a carnal notion thereof, are one and the same thing. Mr. *Robe* hath, by what I have said, proved, to my hand, that it is not spiritual; and, if so, it must either be carnal, or neither carnal nor spiritual: And, if it be neither of these, then it seems to belong neither to heaven nor earth; and, if so, then it must either belong to hell, or to nothing. But so very sure is Mr. *Robe* that I am wrong, in thinking that a carnal notion and an imaginary idea of Christ's human body is the same thing, that his following words are, *p.* 51. *When he gives any proof of this, it shall be answered. But this I do not expect he will do in haste: For all that he saith against carnal fleshly views of Christ, doth not so much as come near the present question, and saith nothing against such idea and conception of our Lord's humanity as is according to the word, and which we cannot have but by the help of our imagination; as hath been so often mentioned.* I answer. Too often indeed, to the scandal of religion, hath this absurd doctrine been mentioned; but more particularly here while Mr. *Robe* says, *that, when I give proof of what I said, it shall be answered*, it must argue a strong delusion he is under, that he is resolved to cleave to it, though *proof* be given against it. But, though he does not expect proof; yet, if it be once given, and be really *proof*, he ought to yield to truth proven, and not rebel against the light, nor resolve to believe lies. But, when here he speaks of such *an idea of Christ's humanity as is according to the word, and which we cannot have but by the help of our imagination*, I would fain know, what he means by such an imaginary idea of Christ's humanity as is *according to the word?* What I asserted I proved from scripture. But he, not *receiving*

ving the truth in love, hath rejected my proofs. But where will he find a ſcripture for proving the neceſſity of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, in order to believe in him as God-man? As this is impoſſible, ſo it is intolerable, that he ſhould father his idolatrous fancies upon the word of God, by a mere and bare aſſertion, that it is *according to the word.* It would ſeem he had not full freedom to aſſert this; and therefore did not call it the word of God: For indeed to maintain, in order to faith in Chriſt, the abſolute neceſſity of an imaginary idea of him as man, is neither to bear witneſs that he is *God*, nor that his word is the word of God. Yet, by ſaying it is according to the word, he either impoſes upon his readers, or wills them to underſtand it is the word of God he means. But *ſearch the ſcriptures,* ſays Chriſt; for they teſtify of me, *John* v. 39. namely, that I am God. His hearers there made no queſtion but that he was a *man*; for as ſuch he was the object of their preſent ſenſe; but *they ſought to kill him,* becauſe he made himſelf *equal with God, verſ.* 18. therefore he refers them to the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, teſtifying, that he is God, ſuch as that, *Iſa.* xlv. 22. *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.* But their ſenſitive idea of him as a preſent man, together with Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of him as an abſent man, ſo far as they did and do take place, ſtand in a direct oppoſition to a witneſſing that he is God, or God-man in one divine perſon. The word of God never did nor will patronize ſuch a vile, abominable, or vain imagination. However natural it is in itſelf, yet, as applied to the act or object of faith, it is neither ſpiritual nor divine, nor any way agreeable to God's holy word, nor any way ſib to the *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt,* Eph. i. 17.

And, inſtead of being helpful to faith, it is hurtful and prejudicial to it. To which Mr. *Robe* anſwers, *p.* 51. "It does "not hurt and hinder, but help the ſaving view of the God-"man, and the believing view of the glorious perſon of our "Immanuel, God with us. So thought Mr. *Rutherford* and "Mr. *Durham,* as aſſerted above; and all others who un-"derſtood what they ſaid, and ſaid what they underſtood." Here Mr. *Robe* ſtudies to hide his ſhame under the covert of theſe excellent names, RUTHERFORD and DURHAM. But, as I have above ſhewed, they were never ſo void of underſtanding, as to deliver themſelves in ſuch terms as Mr. *Robe* does on this ſubject. So I hereby defy him, or any man, to produce a divine, before theſe late deluſive times, and of any note in the Chriſtian world, doing ſo.

Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 52. in answer to some of my words, "That "though we do not believe till we behold his glory, as the only "begotten of the Father [as I had asserted from *John* i. 14. "*The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory*]; yet, says "he, an imaginary idea of that flesh is no unprofitable fancy, "because we can have no understanding of that proposition, "*The word was made flesh*, without it." Now, here he exposes his own ignorance, as neither understanding what he himself said, nor saying what he understands: For, he having so often told, that the object of an imaginary idea can be nothing but what is only corporeal, it is impossible, in a consistency with this, for him to understand himself. By flesh here we are to understand the human nature of Christ, as it is assumed into a personal union with the eternal Word, the λογος: But flesh under this consideration is such a mysterious, spiritual, and supernatural object of faith, that it can by no means be the object of any imaginary idea, without considering it as a thing merely and only corporeal; which is so horrid *(horresco referens)!* as might fright any Christian ear. But next, whereas Mr. *Robe* says, "We can have no understanding "of that proposition, *The Word was made flesh*, without any "imaginary idea of that flesh;" that is, and must be, according to him, in a corporeal sense; now, I would ask, Is this proposition a corporeal object? If this *truth*, That the *Word was made flesh*, or any other *truth* whatsoever, be a corporeal object that can be painted on the brain by an imaginary idea, pray, let him tell, what image it hath? what it is like? or what form and figure can be given it? Nay, he can as soon paint the sound of a trumpet, as paint upon his mind by imagination the joyful sound of this truth, That the *Word was made flesh*. Therefore I may say to him with the poet, *Et si vis simile pingere, pinge sonum*. Nay but, says he, we may have the imaginary idea of flesh; for that is corporeal, like other human bodies. Then I would ask, what help doth this imaginary idea of flesh give to the understanding of this truth, *That the Word was made flesh?* It is not the meaning of the truth, but only the image of the corporeal thing called flesh or humanity that it gives; that is, that by flesh we are not to understand a house, or a rock, or a mountain, but just the thing that every one knows by the name of flesh, or a human body. Now, if this be not an unprofitable fancy, when mixed in with faith, then let it be considered, what help it gives to the faith or knowledge of this proposition, That *the Word was made flesh*, to have the imaginary idea of flesh. Just as much help, as if I should advance this proposition, *that the*

Vatican is a house full of books; but you can have no understanding of this proposition, without an imaginary idea of a house. This hath some truth in it; and yet is so much out of purpose, that none who understand what they are saying, would gravely express themselves so, especially on a divine subject. I had said, that to see Christ savingly, and without a delusion, is not to see flesh, but God manifest in the flesh. To which Mr. *Robe* answers, "Though it be not to see flesh only; yet "we cannot see him, God manifested in the flesh without "seeing flesh, or an idea and conception of that flesh in "which God is manifested." To which I reply, True; we cannot indeed see him as God manifest in the flesh, without seeing flesh by faith, I grant; which is a seeing his human nature subsisting in his divine person. But Mr. *Robe* speaks of seeing flesh by an imaginary idea of that flesh: Whereas no natural idea whatsoever can see this flesh, as faith does; because this flesh or human nature of Christ is no natural thing subsisting in itself, by the will of the God of nature, as other natural things do: Therefore no natural eye can see it, nor natural ideas conceive it to be what it really is; but only the spiritual eye of faith, which is *the evidence of things not seen.*

Mr. *Robe, p.* 53. after citing some of my words, gives what he calls precisely the whole strength of my argument: And, though he touches it in part, yet (there is some unfair representation of my mind; for, though I said, that true faith will have nothing to do with a half Christ; yet I do not love, for reasons already given, to hear my words represented, as if I had spoke of a half of Christ's manhood) his answer deserves to be animadverted upon. And, (1.) He says, "We may have an "imaginary idea, without thinking that moment upon him as "God, and separating his manhood from his Godhead, and "thinking upon a false Christ; even as we may think upon "him as God, without any thought that moment of his man-"hood; and yet do not think upon a false Christ, or sepa-"rate his Godhead from his manhood." This he endeavours to illustrate from the attributes of God, which are himself; and yet, says he, "I do not think upon a false God, when "I think upon his eternity, without thinking upon his im-"mensity, when I think upon his omnipotence without think-"ing upon his omnipresence; because my finite mind and "capacity can do no other."

Here Mr. *Robe* alledges, we may think of Christ as man, without thinking of him as God, and yet think on the true Christ. *Answer:* We cannot think believingly on Christ as man, with precision or abstraction. As faith cannot appre-

hend one person of the glorious Trinity, so as to abstract from the other two, because of the undivided nature and essence of the Godhead; so it cannot apprehend the human nature of Christ abstractly from the divine, because of his undivided personality. It will be owned, the imaginary idea is only of Christ as man, or his human body. And this is owned also with reference to the imaginary idea of any man regenerate or unregenerate. The natural idea even in a spiritual man is not faith, nor helpful to it, but hurtful; because it necessarily separates the object of faith, which looks to the person, and not to one nature only: Yea that idea looks only to the human nature, and not to the divine. Indeed faith may look more directly in its acting to one nature than another, for example, the human nature; but then this look of faith *includes* and *implies* a looking also to the divine nature, (though not so expressly); because faith looks to him through the glass of the word, and in the light of the Spirit, which cannot give a view of a false or a half Christ, but only of a true and a whole Christ. And hence, though faith may act more directly upon Christ as a *Priest*, for pardon, at times, under the sense of the *guilt* of sin, and not so directly upon him as a *King*, which it may do at another time under the sense of the *power* of sin; yet its acting upon Christ in one office, includes and implies an acting upon the other offices; because it is the act of saving faith, which includes all his offices. Though it be acting upon Christ as a *Priest*, which is *justifying faith*; yet, because justifying faith is also *saving faith*, it includes, I say, an acting upon the other offices also, though not so explicitly at that time. But this cannot be said of an imaginary idea, that, when by it we think upon Christ as man, it includes an idea of Christ as God; for the idea cannot reach to such a height.

As to the attributes of God which we cannot conceive but separately, the same may be said as above: The saving faith of one attribute includes and implies the faith of all his other attributes that are essentially one with it: Though we do not so explicitly apprehend the rest at the same time; yet we do it implicitly. (Whereas an imaginary idea of one object does not imply the idea of any other object at the same time; unless that idea be under the conduct of understanding; without which fancy is not capable to apprehend any relations or connexions even in natural things). Hence, as in scripture he that sees Christ by faith, is said to see the Father, the believing knowledge of Christ implies the believing knowledge of the Father. It is not said, he that seeth Christ (as Mr. *Robe* means)

by

by one idea, *viz.* of imagination, ascends to the Father by another, *viz.* of understanding: No; but the saving sight of Christ involves in it the sight of God; and so of all the perfections of God in him; though not explicitly all of them at once, but perhaps only this or that attribute; yet implicitly all, because it sees God in him. This is what cannot be said of any imaginary idea. Thus he that breaks one command, is said to break them all: A sin against any one command, is a sin against all the commands; because the authority is contemned by which they are all injoined. Hence, according to scripture, one sin discovered in the light of the Spirit of God, implies a discovery of all sin; as, when the woman of *Samaria* was convicted of her adulteries, she then saw, as in a map, all her sins; and therefore said, *John* iv. 29. *Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.* As when one looks but to one city in a map of the whole earth, by looking to that, he sees the whole; so, when God by his Spirit shews to a man, in the glass of the word, any one particular sin, though that be most directly looked to; yet, at the same time, he sees a whole world of wickedness that is in his nature, heart and life. When *Moses* said, *Shew me thy glory*, God says, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee*; though *Moses* could not see all directly and explicitly, but only by parts as it were; yet what he saw, did imply all. Now, unless Mr. *Robe* can shew, that his imaginary idea of Christ as man, does imply an idea of the whole person, which he owns he cannot do, then his adducing these instances of our conceiving one attribute of God, and not another, at the same time, does not answer his purpose. For, as faith's view of the human nature of Christ, being still scriptural and spiritual, imports necessarily in it a view of his person; so faith's view of the power of God, for example, necessarily imports a view of all his other perfections implicitly; because it does not view that power abstractly, as power, but as it is the power of God, or the power of an infinitely perfect being, which ingrosses all perfections in his nature. Thus, of other attributes of the divine Majesty, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, *&c.* when one is viewed, all are viewed indirectly and consequentially; because faith and spiritual reason have eyes to see consequences in a moment, which no imaginary idea ever had.

Mr. *Robe*, *p.* 54. speaks *of such an idea of Christ as man, as that, if it excludes his Godhead, it would altogether hinder faith, instead of helping it.* This he says he abhors. But what if I assert, and it is plain from what I have just now said, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man, does in itself, and in its

own

own nature, exclude the Godhead? Whether the man that hath that idea, by another act of his mind, conceive of his Godhead, or not, and whether the man abhor that idea, or not; yet that imaginary idea of Christ as man, in its own nature, includes no more than his manhood, or human body, according to Mr. *Robe*'s own concession. And how an imaginary idea, that can go no farther, can be helpful to faith, in conceiving of his Godhead, is to me inexplicable But, lest Mr. *Robe* should say, I impute errors to him which yet he professes to abhor, I may answer to this as *H. Alting* to the *Lutherans*, objecting thus: "These errors we neither own nor teach, but "with our whole souls renounce and detest." His answer is, "Neither do we impute them to you, because the law of charity won't allow us to do so; but we only shew what can be "gathered by necessary consequence from your principles, "that, when the fountains of such errors are detected, you "may reject that doctrine you have so unfairly embraced." Even so say I.

But, says he, *p.* 54. *Where that idea ends, the understanding proceeds to conceive of him by a different way of conceiving*, &c. I confess, I cannot conceive of what Mr. *Robe* thinks he conceives about this matter; and I can hardly conceive that he himself can conceive what he says. One must think that the imaginary idea of Christ's humanity, which, according to him, leads the van, is a thing that he owns is without understanding; but, where it ends, the understanding proceeds. This is a sort of divinity I never saw in the Bible, nor read in any author before. Indeed I think the imaginary idea of Christ as man, which, as I said, in itself includes no more for its object, and proceeds no farther, as Mr. *Robe* owns, is a thing without understanding; and so far we agree; and therefore can do no good, but hurt to faith. But sure I am, the faith by which we apprehend the humanity of Christ as subsisting in his person, is not without understanding, but is an intelligent and judicious act. And a spiritually enlightened understanding is as necessary to conceive the mysterious humanity of Christ, which subsists not but in the divinity, as it is necessary to conceive of the divinity itself. And, since the imaginary idea in this case includes nothing but the image of a mere corporeal object, it gives nothing but a misshapen notion of this mystery, which is inconceivable, and which alone is the object of faith.

It is not Mr. *Erskine* then, but Mr. *Robe* that makes the human nature of Christ not the object of faith. He makes it the object of an imaginary idea, which, it seems, he reckons can comprehend it. This idea he says, "*goes as far as it*

"*can*,

" *can*, namely, to conceive of Christ as man; and, then " *where it ends, the understanding proceeds* to an idea of a " different nature, to conceive of him as God, and then as " God-man, without an imaginary idea." Whence, it seems, he reckons the human nature of Christ neither properly the object of faith nor of understanding, but of an imaginary idea, distinct from faith and spiritual understanding both. Whereas I assert, That the human nature of Christ, (not by itself, which is a *non-ens*, but) as it subsists in the person of the Son of God, is not, and cannot be the object of fancy and imagination, but only the object of faith. To conceive of the natural manhood of Christ by itself, or to have an imaginary idea of that, is indeed a vain imagination; because it is a thinking of that which never was and never will be; for that human nature never did subsist, nor ever will, but in that manner wherein faith alone can apprehend it. To abstract from this manner of its subsistence, and think upon matter only, or the material flesh, and make that the object of faith, is gross idolatry. But to think upon it as we ought, that is, without abstracting from the manner of its subsistence in the Son of God, is impossible; it is a conceiving what is inconceivable: And therefore cannot be the object of any imaginary idea, but only the object of faith. And, if the objects of faith are more sure and certain than those that are the objects of fancy and imagination, which have no reality but in a man's notion, as the case is here; and, if Mr. *Robe*'s opinion leads thus to the error of *Marcion* and his followers, who denied the verity of Christ's human nature, saying, he was only man in appearance, and not in reality: I leave it to others to consider. It is true, he hath asserted once and again, That Christ was truly man, having a true body and a reasonable soul: But, if his true and real manhood never did really subsist in itself, nor had any real subsistence but in the person of the Son of God, which only is the object of faith, Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of it, which cannot conceive of his humanity as thus subsisting, seems to border on denying, or not believing the real subsistence of this humanity; and, consequently, according to him, or his doctrine, the real humanity of Christ is not the object of faith, while he makes it the object of fancy and imagination. To see the humanity of Christ without a mystery, is indeed a vain imagination; *for great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh.* And to deny the mystery of his humanity, is to deny the reality of it. The human body of Christ, which alone is the object of an imaginary idea, cannot, as such, be the object of faith, but only of sense, as I have

oft

oft declared. To say that it is not the object of sense, is to deny that it is a true body, such as can be seen and handled, as Christ bids *Thomas* do: By which he declared it to be an object of sense; in which respect it cannot be supposed to be the object of faith, without supposing an absurdity, and destroying the very nature of it as a human body. And to make it, as such, the object of faith, is (as I have also said before) to confound faith and sense, and the object of faith with the object of fancy

But, though an imaginary idea can separate the humanity from the divinity, and so separate the object of sense from the object of faith, or rather make Christ, the object of faith, nothing but the object of sense or imagination, which is a sinful prescinding and abstraction of the one from the other; yet faith cannot make that precision. It cannot conceive of his human nature by itself, because it conceives of it as the human nature of the Son of God; that is, human nature subsisting in his person, or an incarnate God: Which no natural idea, simple or complex, can do; because it is not the spiritual eye by which such an object can be seen, being incomprehensible. Now, to conceive by faith of the human nature of the Son of God, is not to think of his humanity by itself; for that, as I said, is to divide the object. Hence I may argue, That which would destroy the very notion of Christ's having a true body, cannot be truth. But to suppose that that part of Christ which is visible and corporeal, is not the object of sense, but of faith, tends to destroy the very notion of its being a true body.

Mr. *Robe* makes (*p.* 55.) the body of Christ, abstract from the soul, the only proper object of an imaginary idea; which he says cannot extend to the soul. Thus he strengthens my argument, in saying, that that which is the object of every man's fancy, cannot be the object of faith; because it is only the object of sense, that can be seen with eyes, felt with hands, *&c.* To make it the object of faith, and not of sense, would be to destroy the notion of its being a true body, and to fall in, as I said just now, with the gross error of the *Marcionites*, that made it but an imaginary body, a shadow; or the *Ubiquitarians*, that make his body to be every where; or the *Papists*, in their arguments for transubstantiation, that make it edible, yea to be really eaten in the sacrament, although it be only in heaven now; and *who* answer all the *Protestants* arguments against that real presence, by alledging, it is an incomprehensible mystery, and a proper object of faith. In opposition to all such imaginary dreams, it is necessary to

assert, That the mere natural body of Christ is properly the object of sense, not of faith; otherwise the *Papists* were justifiable in worshipping the host, the bread in the sacrament, if it were the real body of Christ, and the proper object of faith. From which gross idolatry may God deliver these lands, when the hands of such idolaters are thus strengthened by *Protestant* divines, making the human nature of Christ, as it is visible, material and corporeal, and as it is the object of an imaginary idea, to be the proper object of faith. If Mr. *Robe* make it (as he seems to do elsewhere) the object both of faith and sense, this were to make it both corporeal and incorporeal, visible and invisible: Whereas faith's objects are all invisible; *it being the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. insomuch that, though Christ's human body were again on earth, it would be the object of sight and sense, as now it is of imagination, but not of faith. For, when faith acts in relation to it, it cannot apprehend it (as sense does) under any visible or corporeal consideration, but the contrary. Yea, true faith believes it to be an object, not of faith, but of sense and sight; because it believes it to be a true body. And hence it is impossible for true faith to believe that that true body is in itself the object of faith; because faith's belief that it is a true body that can be seen, touched, handled, or that it is an object of sense and sight, and not of faith properly; faith's belief of this, I say, is founded upon a divine testimony, declaring that it is a true body: Which testimony is indeed the object of faith; but not the true body itself, which is the object only of sense or imagination.

Again, while Mr. *Robe* says, (*ibid.*) "That though an imaginary idea of Christ [O strange language!] can extend no farther than the human nature of the Mediator, [he should have said the human body;] yet it is helpful to our thinking of him justly, and to the receiving him as God-man, insomuch as it goes as far as it can." How far is that, may I inquire? Even as far as it can to dishonour our Immanuel, God-man, Redeemer, by conceiving of him under a bodily form or image; for it can view him in no part of his spirituality, human or divine, I mean, neither in his human soul, nor divine nature; nor put so much honour upon him, as to conceive him to be a person; far less such a person as he is: And therefore is so far from helping, that it altogether hinders faith, till it be banished away, that faith may act upon its proper object. If Mr. *Robe* therefore abhors such an idea as excludes the true object of faith, he should abhor his own doctrine of imaginary ideas, which, in their own nature,

ture, and according to himself, exclude every thing that is not corporeal, and include nothing but what is so. And hence he finds himself obliged to say, "Where that imaginary i-"dea ends, the understanding proceeds;" that is, to another way of conceiving of him, whereby he may be conceived and understood to be God and man in one person. This plainly enough imports, what is true, that Mr. *Robe*, by his imaginary idea of Christ as man, cannot so much as *understand* that he is man; for, where that idea ends, *understanding begins*. Whence one would think his mind is, that understanding must begin with ignorance, or proceed to conceive of Christ as God-man, upon an idea that has no understanding to conceive him to be either God or man. And indeed a blind idol or image in the head, being a *teacher of lies*, can teach none of these truths; and therefore must be a very blind guide to understanding. Surely no man that has the eyes of his understanding open, will chuse such a guide.

But, says Mr. *Robe* to the same purpose, a few lines thereafter, "Now, is that kind of idea, whereby I conceive of "Christ as man, hurtful, because it cannot think of him as "God, but must leave the understanding to do it, and go on "with conceiving of him as God, and on his person, [that is, "God-man,] without any imaginary idea; or [as he says a-"bove] without the help of any species presented from the ima-"gination, as in the first case." Now, here some things deserve to be remarked. 1*st*. Mr. *Robe* again makes Christ as man the object of an imaginary idea, but not the object of understanding; for he leaves it to the understanding to think of him as God, and to think on his person. So that, by his own confession here, his imaginary idea cannot think of Christ as man *with*, but must do it *without* understanding. Which may make one think strange, how he can make that the object of *faith* which he does not allow to be the object of *understanding*. 2*dly*, At the same time one would think he makes his imaginary idea to have some understanding and rational knowledge in it; because he says, it leaves the understanding to do what it cannot do: Which seems to import some more wit, than he can allow it, as it is a faculty conversant about no other but corporeal objects. Yet, 3*dly*, He is clear that it can neither conceive of Christ as God, nor as he is God-man in one person; in which respect only I assert he is the object of faith. But Mr. *Robe* cannot allow this; because I do not allow his imaginary idea, or the object of it, to have any share in this matter. And yet so contradictory to himself must he be, that he is obliged to come over to my side

and assert the same thing of *understanding* that I do of *faith*. For, 4*thly*, He says, that, when the imaginary idea leaves the understanding to do what it cannot do, then the understanding leaves the imaginary idea, and does all without it: For his words are, "That idea cannot think of him as God "but must leave the understanding to do it, and to go on with "conceiving of him as God, and of his person, *without* "*any imaginary idea*." Here then Mr. *Robe* seems to be of my mind. Is it possible for the understanding to conceive of Christ as God, and as God-man in one person, *without any imaginary idea of Christ as man?* And is it lawful for Mr. *Robe* to say so? and yet unlawful for me, yea, according to him, blasphemous and heretical, to say the same that he says? If there be any crime here, then it may be said, *Turpe est doctori, cum culpa redarguit ipsum.* Nay, the fault seems to be doubled in him, because he makes it possible for his several ideas here mentioned, which seem to import but *natural understanding*, to conceive of Christ in his personality and Godhead, *without any imaginary idea:* Whereas I made the same thing possible only to faith, which imports *spiritual understanding*, or the mind enlightened and spiritualized, and that without the help of any species presented from the imagination, as Mr. *Robe* here words it. Nay, but he adds, "The "imaginary idea helps in going as far as it can go; and "which if it did not go, I could not think upon the Media-"tor as God-man, because I could not think upon him as "man." Here again Mr. *Robe* takes back his word, and either forgets, or contradicts what he just now said, namely, that "the understanding proceeds to think of him as God-man "*without the help of any imaginary idea*." Yet here he says, "Without it he would not think upon him as man." But, if, when the understanding comes, it can conceive justly enough of Christ as God-man in one person, which is a *whole Christ*, why must he still discredit his understanding, as if it could not manage that matter without the help of that ignorant act, which is destitute of understanding, and can help no farther than to present the picture of a man in the head, under the name of Christ; which yet, though it were as real as it is imaginary, would not make a *half Christ?* Why, it requires an intellective or understanding faculty, to conceive or think of the best half of any man whatsoever; that is, to think of him as he is a rational creature: But the imaginative faculty by itself can think of nothing properly but the body, the corps, or outward figure of a man. And to apply this to the notion or view of Christ as man, as if there were no other way of conceiving

ceiving him to be man, but this ignorant way, that imports no understanding at all, makes such gross stuff as I know not what name to give it. And, if ever such a mass of absurdities and inconsistencies was written by any that pretended to learning and divinity, I am not yet informed, nor if any good and spiritual man could publish such carnal doctrine. But I will meddle with no man's state, to judge it. God may leave his own very far.

Mr. *Robe* speaks here also of the necessity of *different ideas distinct in their nature, as the two natures of the glorious Mediator.* And "I must [says he] by one idea think of him as man, "by another as God, and by a third as God and man personally united." This I touched formerly; and shall now only notice, that indeed he speaks, as if he were well stored with ideas, that can serve him for contemplating any object, from the lowest corporeal object to the highest spiritual mystery of the gospel; but never speaks a word of the necessity of saving illumination, and of supernatural faculties for apprehending supernatural things. But the imaginary idea, says he, must be in order to the taking him up as God-man, because without it he could not think upon him as man. Indeed there could be no fear of the want of an imaginary idea of that sort; for that, being natural, still attends faith, as a near neighbour, though neither as an assistant, nor an ingredient in faith; but rather as a let and impediment to right believing, and to a spiritual way of thinking of his manhood; which is not a thinking of him as man; in which respect he is not God; but as God-man in one person, in which respect he is thought upon truly and believingly as both God and man, and in a more noble way than by any imaginary idea of him as man; which is not at all a *believing* the truth of his manhood by faith, but a *seeing* the image of it by imagination: Which fancy and faith, though they be as *inseparable*, yet are they as *incompatible*, as flesh and spirit, while we are here in time. It would be a strange argument, if one should say, spirit and flesh being so inseparable in this world, the spirit cannot act without the flesh, whether viewed in a natural or moral sense, nor can the soul act without the body; therefore the body and flesh is absolutely necessary to the acting of the soul and spirit. Here is the *sine qua non.* Well, it is equally true in this sense, that the soul cannot breathe after God and spiritual things, without bodily breath. But yet what man would wish to be the publisher of a doctrine importing such a heterogeneous composition as this, that, in order to spiritual breathing after God and Christ, it is absolutely necessary that one have bodily breath?

breath? I doubt not but any person, come to the exercise of reason, may see the absurdity of such a doctrine.

" Though [says he, *ib.*] a person, by his imaginary idea, " thinks only upon the manhood of Christ, yet he does not " think upon a false Christ; seeing he does not think him man " only, and no more." He means, no doubt, as he said before, that this image is *always accompanied with a spirit of discretion, whereby he separates the true from the false Christ; so that there is no danger of idolatry*, or that the act of the understanding, whereby the idea of the Mediator is rendered complex, is " so quick [as he here says] that it needs not ma- " ny moments to force it." But, however quick he supposes the understanding to be, I am mistaken if he and I both do not find the imaginary idea and fancy as quick and nimble, yea and much more ready to form images of Christ as man, than the understanding is to conceive of him as God, or God-man in one person. And no wonder, since the former is natural, and the latter requires supernatural aid, as well as all the intellectual powers and faculties of the soul.

However, Mr. *Robe* adds, that, " from all this that he hath " said, the reader will see the poorness of Mr. *Erskine's* so- " phistical quibbling." But, passing this, as unworthy of my regard, I must notice his following words, wherein he thinks to make all that he hath said so plain by this following simile, that any man may understand how the imaginary idea of Christ as man, though it extends no farther than to his manhood, yet is helpful to the conceiving of, and believing in Christ as God-man in one person, or to the apprehending of a whole Christ. His words are, *p.* 55. " The following simile " will illustrate this a little. Man consists of soul and body. " The soul, being a spiritual substance, is not conceived by " any imaginary idea; but the understanding must conceive " of it by a simple and pure act of its own: But the same un- " derstanding conceives of the body, when out of sight, by " an imaginary idea, which cannot extend unto the soul; and " yet that imaginary idea, though it can extend no farther than " the body, is not only helpful, but necessary to think up- " on any particular man; because we can have no idea of " the whole man without it." This simile looks very feasible, as if it would illustrate Mr. *Robe's* position to a demonstration. But, alas! it halts, because lame: *And the legs of the lame are not equal: So is a parable in the mouth of fools*, Prov. xxvi. 7. This parable or simile may hold with respect to all human creatures, in whom their entire human nature, soul and body, is unite in one human person, and where the several

several parts are so naturally connected with the whole, that the imaginary idea of a human body carries along with it the intellectual idea of a living soul animating that body, and constituting a human person; for here one thing includes another. But this simile will by no means hold with respect to Christ, in whom a finite human nature and an infinite divine person are united in one personality: That is, the simile cannot quadrate with one whose human nature is no human person; and, consequently, whose human nature, being unite personally to the divine nature of the person of the Son of God, in which respect only it is the object of faith, can be the object of no mere natural idea whatsoever, far less an imaginary one. So that this simile will no more agree with the faith of Christ as God and man in one person, than an imaginary idea of a man can agree with the great mystery of the child born, and the son given to us, whose name is called, *Wonderful, The Mighty God.* In vain are any natural similies adduced to illustrate or make plain, to human understanding, such inconceivable and supernatural mysteries as surmount all finite understanding. In a word, the imaginary idea of Christ as man, does, in its nature, not at all include, but exclude the thoughts of his being God, as long as it is a truth, that as man he is not God. But the faith of his being God-man, includes the believing view both of his human and divine nature. Though the man that hath the imaginary idea of Christ as man, should think also that he is God; yet the one thought, while it lasts, is properly inconsistent with the other, because the one no way includes the other: As, in the forementioned simile, the notion of a human nature, soul and body, includes the notion of a human person; but so it is not here; where, though the faith of the divine person includes both the natures that subsist therein; yet the imaginary idea of Christ as man, or in his human nature, does no way include the Godhead nor the divine person of Christ. But, because there seems to be false philosophy, as well as false divinity, couched under Mr. *Robe*'s simile here, I shall also consider it a little further in a philosophical way.

He there makes the idea of a whole man to be an act of the understanding; but asserts, that we cannot have this idea of a whole man, without the imaginary idea of a body: Which seems again to acknowledge, that this last idea is not an act of the understanding; though yet he says the understanding conceives of a body, when out of sight, by an imaginary idea, which yet can extend no farther than the body, but notwithstanding is necessary and helpful to think upon

any

any particular man, becauſe we can have no idea of the whole man without it.

Where he ſeems miſerably to confound the beaſt with the man; I mean, the ſenſitive with the rational part of man.

1. He ſays, the ſoul, being a ſpiritual ſubſtance, is not conceived by an imaginary idea; but the underſtanding muſt conceive of it by a ſimple and pure act of its own. Where, firſt, he owns, that the imaginary idea is ſome other thing than the underſtanding, but that the underſtanding muſt conceive of the ſoul. But then he adds, that the ſame underſtanding conceives of the body by an imaginary idea. Here he makes the body, as well as the ſoul, the object of the underſtanding; whereas corporeal objects, as ſuch, are only the objects of ſenſitive and imaginative ideas, but not the objects of intellectual and rational apprehenſion. Material things are the objects of ſenſe and imagination, and ſo of ſenſitive and imaginative knowledge, which all men have in common with brutes; hence are ſaid to know things naturally as brute beaſts, *Jude verſ.* 10. But, though theſe material and corporeal things may be the ſubject concerning which, or the occaſion from which the underſtanding may act; yet they cannot be the object of the rational apprehenſion, but under ſome notional, or ſpiritual and intellectual conſideration. Thus the body can only be conceived by ſenſe or imagination. If I ſee it *preſent*, then it is by *ſenſe*; if it be *abſent*, or if I but ſhut my eyes, and think of it, then it is by *imagination*; and there is no other way by which a body as ſuch can be conceived. And this is properly a ſimple idea of ſenſation.

But, when we conceive of a man conſiſting of ſoul and body, it requires a rational apprehenſion, and a complex notion; wherein we have nothing of the bruiſh ſenſitive idea of a body properly; for under that conſideration it is not the object of rational knowledge. But we conſider it as a body animated with a living ſoul, and ſo apprehend a living man; and under that conſideration it is the object of the intellect; not as it is a body, for ſo, I ſay, it is the object of ſenſation and imagination, but as it is a body thus animated.

To ſay, one cannot have the idea of a whole man, without the imaginary idea of a body, is a ſophiſtical confounding the object of ſenſe and imagination with the object of reaſon and underſtanding: For, though it be true; yet the body, being the object of ſenſe, is not, as ſuch, the object of the underſtanding; for, when a body is the object of underſtanding, it is not viewed corporeally, as the object of ſenſe,

but

but under some formally distinct, intelligible consideration, namely, as a body animated, and subsisting in union with a living soul; as a body so joined with a soul, as to constitute a human person. The idea of a body, as such, belongs to the sensitive part of a man; but the view of the body, thus qualified, and clothed with a living rational soul, cannot, under this consideration, be the object of sense, or sensitive imagination, but only of intellectual and rational consideration.

Thus the imaginary idea of Christ as man, is a mentally-sensitive notion (so to speak) of his human body, or a picture and image of it in the brain, a mere object of inward sense and imagination, not at all the object of faith. Nay, nor is the whole human nature of Christ the proper object of faith, but as it subsists in the divine person of the Son of God, and only under this consideration. But to make it, as it is corporeal, and as it is the object of an imaginary idea, to be the object of faith, is gross and abominable idolatry.

2. That the understanding conceives of the body by an imaginary idea, this cannot be said, unless it conceive of the body rationally, or under some intelligible or rational consideration, no more than the understanding can be said to see with the eye, or hear with the bodily ear: Which it does not, unless it see and hear rationally; for, when a man sees nothing but material objects, and hears nothing but outward sounds, it is not the understanding that sees or hears, even though it be the man that hath understanding, or the rational man that sees and hears; yet it is only in a sensitive way he does so, unless he see and hear rationally. When a man sees a book, so may a beast that wants reason, and so may a babe that wants the exercise of reason. Thus it is not the understanding that sees, unless a man sees it, so as to apprehend the sense, meaning, wisdom, or learning that is in the book: Then, and not till then, does the understanding see it; for then he sees not merely with the sensitive, but with the rational eye: And the imaginary idea of a book, which belongs to the sensitive faculty, can give no help to the understanding, or intellectual sight which belongs to the rational soul. The intellect does not thus see with bodily eyes.

Again, in hearing with the ears, though a man were attentive to listen; yet, while he hears nothing but a sound of words or voices, his understanding does not hear, any more than a brute (startling at a noise) does, unless he hears rationally, so as to understand the words and sense of what he hears. And, as a man may think and speak rationally of the subject-matter of a book, even without the imaginary idea of

a book, and may think rationally of what he hears with the ear without the imaginary idea of the voice or sound that came into his ear; so it is possible to think rationally of a man, who consists of soul and body, without the imaginary idea or sensitive view of a body. But, says Mr. *Robe*, can he conceive of the whole man without the imaginary idea of a body? Yea, when he conceives rationally of a man, his conception is not sensitive, respecting the body; but intellectual, respecting the man or the person: And the more that sense intrudes itself into the company of the intellect, by forming conceptions of the body, and presenting images of the outward form and figure of that, the more is it a hinderance, instead of a help, to the rational conception of the person, or the intellectual apprehension of the gifts, parts, and other real properties of the man, as such.

What *sense divides*, looking only to the body, *reason unites*, and looks to the man, the person. Reason therefore includes the consideration of the whole man, soul and body jointly, as one person, one human nature; sense takes not in the whole, but a part, the body. To say then, we cannot conceive of a whole man without the imaginary idea of a body, is to say, that reason cannot consider what God hath joined in one person, without sense interposing, to make division and confusion, by setting up the image of a body instead of a man.

But suppose, that, while matter and spirit are so connected as we should scarce be able to have the rational conception of a man, without the sensitive image of a body; yet to what purpose is this confusion introduced into divinity, blending sense and reason and faith together? Alas! what sort of a religion is that like to prove, wherein imaginary ideas lead the van? They seem to have little of the exercise of reason, who cannot distinguish it from sense; and far less of the exercise of faith, who confound it with sense and fancy.

Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 55. "We cannot think upon Christ really "as he is God-man, without this imaginary idea of him as "man, seeing it makes a part of the idea or conception of "him as God-man; and, if that were wanting that moment, "we would only think of him as God, and not as man also." Where his speaking of a part of the idea of him as God-man, smells rank of what I had observed, a parting and dividing the object of faith, and of making parts where there is no partition. The object of saving faith is not a twofold object, but only one, namely, God in Christ; that is, one God in and through one Mediator, who is God man. The manhood of

of Christ is not one object of faith, and his Godhead another, and his personality a third. Nay, it is different ideas indeed that makes the division, and consequently the destruction of the object of faith. But the doctrine of faith asserts, and the grace of faith maintains the unity of the object of faith respecting the person of Christ. Why, but, if this imaginary idea be wanting that moment, we would only think of him as God, and not as man also, says Mr. *Robe*. But this I deny: For the true faith of his person God-man excludes only the corporeal image, or the ideal and imaginary thought of him as man; but it includes the real spiritually rational, true and believing thought of him as both God and man in one person. Besides, the imaginary idea of Christ as man is still a low, unworthy, earthly way of thinking of him, by means only of natural sensation; which is necessarily a mishapen thought of him: But to think of him believingly, is a high and heavenly way, by the means of spiritual illumination and divine teaching.

Mr. *Robe* says again here, *p.* 55. "That the imaginary idea "of Christ as man is necessary to faith, so far as it is necessary "that we have some conception of what we believe. And, "if Mr. *Erskine* set up for a faith of what we can have no "conception of, it is the same, and no better than the blind "and implicit faith of the *Papists*." *Answer*. This, according to the *Scots* byword, is *ill fliting*; for it is truly verified in Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine of imaginary ideas, particularly of Christ as man: For what knowledge and conception of what we believe is given by forming the image or figure of a man in the brain? No more knowledge than what the most brutish creature of the human kind naturally hath. I set up indeed for a faith of what is above Mr. *Robe*'s conception and mine both; but a faith founded upon the word and truth of God; the divine revelation of this glorious mystery, AN INCARNATE GOD. And I think it were better, with *Papists*, to believe as the church believes, and at the church's direction, than to have a faith guided by an imaginary idea; which Mr. *Robe* makes to lead the van in believing. Whereas the knowledge of Christ that I maintain to be necessary to, and imported in faith, is the knowledge of him as revealed in the word of God. Our imagination can form no true image of Christ in the mind; but God gives us the true image of Christ in the word. How fitly the blind implicit faith of the *Papists* is brought in † here, let the world

† *Davenantii determinationes quæst. p.* 133. Credere nemo intelligitur, nisi quando fides ejus propria ad creditum aliquod enunciabile terminatur, ut

judge. Their doctrine of human traditions, and decrees of councils and Popes, as pretended to be of equal authority with the ſcriptures, is to deny the word of God to be the only rule of faith, and judge of controverſies. My doctrine is the direct oppoſite of this. But woes me! that ever ſuch doctrine was publiſhed by a Miniſter of the church of *Scotland*, that a dead idol, or image of a human creature formed in the mind by imagination, muſt neceſſarily be ſet up for an object of faith and worſhip. This is the ſame, and no better than the idolatrous faith and worſhip of the Pagans. It is ſtrange to make an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man neceſſary to faith, and to give this for a reaſon of it, becauſe we cannot believe what we have no conception of. If the meaning were, that we cannot believe without conceiving *that Chriſt is man* as well as God, this is a truth. But as an imaginary idea *that Chriſt is man*, is direct nonſenſe, becauſe a man can no more ſee a truth by an imaginary idea of things corporeal, than he can feel a ſhadow with his fingers; ſo an imaginary idea of Chriſt *as man*, is no conception at all, either of his perſon, or of any truth to be believed anent him, but juſt of a human body preſented to the fancy. And to ſay, that we cannot believe without this notion of a body, or conception of a corporeal object, is, I think, one of the moſt wild and carnal propoſitions that ever any man advanced; for we ought at leaſt to believe rationally. Though faith is a *ſupernatural* act, and that both becauſe the *power* and *ability* for it is ſupernaturally given, and the *evidence* whereon it reſts is ſupernatural; yet it is a *rational* act, no enthuſiaſtick notion, whereof no reaſon can be given, but merely a ſtrong perſuaſion of one's perceiving, ſeeing or feeling ſomething. And, though a believing perſuaſion, whereof he that hath it ſometimes cannot, through weakneſs, give a rational account, may be *ſolid*; yet a perſuaſion whereof no reaſon can be given, is certainly not *faith*, but *fancy*. Much more is that faith but a fancy that is founded upon a conception or imaginary idea of Chriſt as man; which imports not ſo much as a rational conſideration of him, but a notional view of his manhood in the brain. Which is a thing

ut rectè docuit Thomas. *Ibid.* De fide implicita, non ſalutifera; nam fides quæ valet ad ſalutem, ſemper apprehendit verbum evangelii, quod eſt potentia Dei ad ſalutem. Implicita à Papiſtis vocatur, (1.) quæ in cognitione Prælatorum involvitur, populo interim dogmata illa, quæ ſic credi dicuntur, omnino neſciente. (2.) Quæ etſi habeat particularem apprehenſionem dogmatum creditorum, habet tamen eorundem certitudinem nixam, non verbi aut ſpiritûs teſtimonio, ſed auctoritate & teſtimonio Prælatorum ita docentium & decernentium. Prior fides implicita fuit in *cognitione*; hæc implicita eſt in *auctoritate* hominum aliorum, *&c.*

thing as easy and natural to all mankind, as it is for one to shut his eyes, and retain the notion of a man in his head. No wonder then that the man who publishes this thinks he hath a right conception of what he believes, and will not set up for a *faith of what he can have no conception of.* Many mysteries of the gospel, particularly concerning the wonderful person of Christ, God in our nature, are so deep and profound, that the framing distinct conceptions of them is beyond all human reach, and transcends not only sense, but reason: Not that gospel-truths do contradict sound reason, but they may transcend it. What is contradictory to reason, must be rejected; for God lays no man under an obligation to believe what cannot possibly be true: But though what is contrary to reason, cannot be received as an article of faith; yet what transcends our capacity and conception, may be great truths of God, which we are called to believe, and which reason itself says we ought to believe; not because it appears rational to us, but upon the divine authority of the revelation, submitting our reason to that, and believing it the most rational thing in the world, that we should believe what God affirms, and do what he commands.—"For indeed [says Dr. *John Collings*, "the continuator of *Pool* † on 2 *Cor.* x. 5.] to give assent to a "proposition merely upon a sensible or rational demonstration, "is no faith; that is, no divine faith. Truly to believe, in a "divine sense, is to assent to a proposition upon the credit "of the revelation, though we cannot make it out by our "reason. And this is to have our thoughts brought into ca-"ptivity to the obedience of Christ, *&c.*" Gospel-mysteries are to be received then upon the testimony of God in his word, such as this doctrine of an incarnate God, that the *Word was made flesh.* And indeed, if Mr. *Robe* here speak his own experience, that he never believed what he had no conception of, he hath, upon the matter, declared, that to this day he never believed the great mystery of godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*; which is a mystery beyond our conception, and what cannot be seen but by that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen.* Mr. *Froysell* on *Matth.* xiii. 11, 12. says, "We do "not so much believe them [*viz.* the mysterious truths of "the gospel] by our understanding, as we understand them "by

† Dr. *Calamy*, in his *account of the Ministers, &c. ejected by the act for uniformity*, *vol.* II. *p.* 15. 474. says, that Dr. *John Collings*, a very learned and eminent Minister at *Norwich*, in the county of *Norfolk*, is the author of the annotations on *Jeremiah* and the *Lamentations*, the four *Evangelists*, the two epistles to the *Corinthians*, that to the *Galatians*, those to *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*, and the book of the *Revelation*, in the supplement to *Pool's*.

" by our believing." And the learned *Arrowſmith*, D. D. in *Cambridge*, in his treatiſe, intitled, ΘΕΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ, or, *God made man*, on *John* i. *p.* 44. hath theſe words: " There are two ſorts of things. Some things there are which we do firſt " underſtand, and then believe; others which we firſt believe, " and then come to underſtand. If ye go to natural things, " firſt ye underſtand them, apprehend the inſide and out- " ſide of them, and then believe them, becauſe ye under- " ſtand them. But now, in theſe great ſupernatural myſte- " ries, that ye may underſtand them, you muſt firſt believe " them. For this there are two rules. 1. If ye will firſt ſet " reaſon on work, believe no more than ye can find out in theſe " myſteries, that *will hinder* faith; but if, after ye have be- " lieved them, ye will ſet reaſon a-work, that *may help faith*, " &c." My opponent is of a quite contrary mind; yea, of a mind I doubt if ever any was of but himſelf. Dr. *Arrow-ſmith* ſays, immediately before theſe words above cited, " Scri- " pture will help you more than reaſon here." But Mr. *Robe* cannot believe without the help of an imaginary idea or conception; and this conception he muſt have before he believe. This is true, ſays *Arrowſmith*, if it were ſpoken of under-ſtanding in natural things. Now, while Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks of the natural faith of natural things, he muſt indeed be doing with his natural ideas of natural and corporeal things. But to make any ſuch natural thing, as ſuch, the proper object of ſaving faith, is what none will do that are not under the power of great ignorance.

Mr. *Robe* next ſays, *p.* 55. " How an imaginary idea of the " Mediator's human nature, according to the diſcovery of it " in the word, for this muſt always be, is unbelief, which " Mr. *Erskine* hath aſſerted again and again, I muſt leave to " him to explain when he gets leiſure; for, at preſent, I can- " not make ſenſe of it." Here I muſt deſire Mr. *Robe* to explain at his leiſure what he means by an imaginary idea of Chriſt's human nature, *according to the diſcovery of it in the word*; for this, he ſays, muſt always be. But, according to the word of God, it muſt never be; for the word of God diſcharges all vain imaginations of whatever ſort. And indeed, if an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, be unbelief, as I did aſſert, then it can never be according to the word. Though the word make a diſcovery of Chriſt's human nature; yet it patroniſes no imaginary idea of it. But, ſince it puzzles Mr. *Robe* to think how his darling imaginary idea of Chriſt as man can be called unbelief, I ſhall here take leiſure to explain how it is ſo.

An imaginary idea of Chriſt as man is at beſt but an i-

maginary

maginary and ideal knowledge of Christ. *But* this imaginary and ideal knowledge is both ignorance and unbelief. *Therefore,* an imaginary idea of Christ as man, (when supposed to belong to faith,) is ignorance and unbelief. The first of these propositions I suppose cannot be denied; for it ascribes as much to that idea as possibly can be ascribed to it, namely, some kind of knowledge, though I own it is no more, as I shew elsewhere, than what men may *be said to know naturally as brute beasts.* Therefore, as to the second, that this imaginary and ideal knowledge of Christ as man is ignorance and unbelief, I prove both from the scripture and from the schools. (1.) From the scripture. One of the scriptural accounts of unbelief is, that it lies in a sinful *inability,* as well as unwillingness *to come to him,* and to *receive him as offered,* or to *receive the things of the Spirit of God,* John vi. 44. Rom. viii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Now, the imaginary idea of Christ as man; or the imagination relating to that corporeal object, though by this imagination were meant, just what Mr. *Robe* calls it elsewhere, *Letter second, p. 6.* namely, *that power and faculty in man which recalls the ideas of sensible objects after they are gone, and presents them from time to time to the understanding, as fit matter of thought*; yet this imagination is under even a physical or natural inability, as well as a sinful and moral incapacity, to conceive of that manhood of Christ, as it is the object of faith; which, as such, is no sensible object. It is not within the limits of that faculty to present to the understanding any thing like the proper object of faith; it is naturally incapable of conceiving an object of faith, and capable only of apprehending objects of sense and sight, which, as such, are in scripture set in a direct opposition to objects of faith. Therefore the imaginary idea of Christ as man, when said to belong to faith, or when it intrudes itself into faith's company, is not faith according to scripture, but unbelief. He that cannot believe, is in scripture an unbeliever; and, if inability to believe be unbelief, then to suppose either the act or object of faith to be imported in an imaginary idea of Christ as man, while it is both naturally and morally impossible for that faculty to apprehend that object, as it is the object of faith, is to call that faith which the scripture calls unbelief. Hence, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. it is said, *The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* Here it is plain, that the true knowledge of Christ is a knowing him as he is the image of God, seen in the light of the glorious gospel; and that, where this

this light doth not shine into the mind, it is a blinded, ignorant, unbelieving mind. Now, the object of imaginary and ideal knowledge Mr. *Robe* speaks of, is not Christ as the image of God, but only the image of a man; and that not seen in the light of the glorious gospel, nor with the eye of faith or enlightened understanding, but with the eye of natural fancy and imagination. Therefore that imaginary or ideal knowledge of Christ as man, is ignorance and unbelief, and the very opposite of faith, having no agreement with it, either in its act, object, subject of inhesion, or medium. Of which elsewhere. (2.) From the schools the same thing is easily proven. Philsophers there say, *Ens & verum convertuntur*; that is, the *being* of a thing and the *truth* of it are such convertible terms, that where there is not *truth* there is *nothing*. If a thing be not truly what it is, it is nothing; and if it be not known to be what it is, it is not known at all. Hence an ideal and imaginary knowledge of Christ is ignorance and unbelief; and that because it is no real or true knowlege of him as he is the object of faith. This philosophy is not alien from scripture; for the Spirit of God says, where there is *but a name to live* there is *death*, Rev. iii. 1. He that is not a true Christian, is no Christian at all. Thus the Spirit of God says also of those that *consent not to wholsom words, they are proud, knowing nothing*, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. Where there is no true knowledge of Christ, there is no knowledge of him at all. An imaginary knowledge of Christ is a mere shadow, a non-entity; it hath an appearance of something, but it comes of nothing, goes to nothing, and is nothing, because it is no truth, therefore it belongs not to knowledge, but ignorance, nor to faith, but to unbelief and fancy. In a word, an *evil heart of unbelief* lies *in departing from the living God*, Heb. iii. 12. Hence the argument is evident, Unbelief lies in a departing from the living God, to a seeking of the living among the dead. But an imaginary idea of Christ as man, is a departing from the living God, or from God in Christ revealed in the word, to a dead idol, or image of a man in the brain, instead of the living Immanuel, God-man. Therefore an imaginary idea of Christ as man is unbelief, in departing from the living God, to a dead image. That unbelief lies in a departing from the living God, none will deny. That an imaginary idea can have the living God for its object, Mr. *Robe* denies; for it hath no object but what is corporeal. Therefore the conclusion is evident

and

and undeniable, That an imaginary idea of Christ as man is unbelief †.

Sect. X.

In the next paragraph, *p.* 55, 56. Mr. *Robe* hath these words: "What Mr. *Erskine* adds in this page, is amazing. He applies these words of our Saviour, *The flesh that profiteth nothing*, to Christ as man, or his human nature; which "is not only a perverting the meaning of that scripture, but "a blasphemous application of it." *Answer.* It may be truly amazing to see how Mr. *Robe* should publish such a palpable falshood, that I apply these words of Christ, *The flesh profiteth nothing*, to *Christ as man*, or to his human nature, as if it were *unprofitable*; whereas any that reads my discourse, will see I apply them to Mr. *Robe*'s *imaginary idea of Christ as man*, or in his human nature: Which imaginary idea thereof I proved there, as I do here, *to be unprofitable.* So that I am far from perverting the meaning of that scripture, and far more from the blasphemous application of it, as Mr. *Robe* is pleased to call it, unless he can prove, that his imaginary idea of Christ as man, is such a profitable thing, that it is blasphemy to *say*, *that it profits nothing.* But this indeed I say, and prove too, in this book, as well as before, That such an imaginary idea of that *flesh*, is so vain and unprofitable, that to assert the necessity of it, borders upon blasphemy, and upon a flat contradiction of the true meaning of Christ's words, *The flesh profiteth nothing.*

Mr. *Robe* (*p.* 56.) pretends to give the plain and only meaning of these words, *John* vi. 63. namely, "To eat Christ's flesh "only as the *Capernaumites* [as he expresses it] understood "him, can profit nothing, either to the comfort of the soul, "or the resurrection of the body. How blasphemous is it "to speak of our Lord's humanity, as that which profiteth "nothing? Though it would not profit us to eat his flesh "with our teeth; yet is it not infinitely profitable to us o-"therwise?" And then he proceeds to show, from our larger Catechism, *how necessary it was that our Mediator should be man*, &c. *Answer.* If my comment upon this text ought to have been thus treated, let any consider who reads it o-

† Whereas, as *Charnock* says, *vol.* II. *p.* 554. Spiritual apprehensions are an antidote against unbelief. ——— None can live to Christ as dying and rising for them, who have no other knowledge of him but *after the flesh*, 2 Cor. v. 15, 16. Carnal conceptions of the depths of God do leave a very gloomy darkness upon the soul.

ver; for my words are as follows: *Is it saving faith to see or know Christ after the flesh, either by the eye as a present man, or in the imagination as an absent man? Does not Christ forbid such carnal notions of eating his flesh?* John vi. *Such fancies and gross imaginations made his hearers there to stumble at the true Christ; therefore he says unto them,* vers. 63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, *&c.* Again, *That imaginary idea that cannot think of him justly, but only of the flesh that profiteth nothing, must be a very ill neighbour, yea, a neck-break to faith; which will have nothing to do with a half Christ, but conceives of, receives and matches with the whole person of our Immanuel.* Now, suppose my words here had not touched the proper intent and meaning of the place, nor been agreeable to the analogy of that text and context †; yet, if they be any way agreeable to the analogy of faith, with what impudence could Mr. *Robe* assert that it was a blasphemous application of it? Does he not seem fond to find out blasphemy in the most precious gospel-truth, through his ignorant fondness to maintain his imaginary notions? I own I did not consult any commentator upon that text, when I wrote the foresaid note; but I thought what I said, was obvious to any that had common sense. But now Mr. *Robe* hath obliged me to look to the mind of commentators; and I find so many of them to be of my mind, that it is high arrogance for him to say, that his gloss is the *plain* and *only* meaning, namely, *That to eat Christ's flesh with the teeth, is what profiteth nothing; and that this was the only sense wherein the* Capernaumites *understood it.* If Mr. *Robe* had but consulted Dr. *John Collings*, the continuator of *Pool*, upon that text and context, he would have seen, that he judged it hard to think, that the *Jews* who carped at Christ's doctrine here, of *eating his flesh*, were so brutish as to put this gloss of Mr. *Robe*'s upon them: For thus he speaks upon vers. 52. *How can this man give us his flesh to eat? They still will (or wilfully) understand spiritual things in a corporeal sense. Yet it is hard to conceive how they could imagine that Christ spoke of giving them his flesh to eat, as men eat the flesh of oxen and sheep.* But, which way soever they did understand it, indeed their captious temper inclined them to conceal any other sense they had of it, and to represent what our Saviour said as exceeding absurd. And, upon

† *Maccovii regulæ theol. & philos.* p. 17. Interpretatio alia est analoga contextui, alia analoga fidei.—Patres sæpe non conveniunt in explicatione loci hujus vel illius, & afferunt illi quidem interpretationes *fidei analogas*, sed non semper *analogas contextui.*

upon the text itself, vers. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing* he hath these words: *The flesh of Christ eaten carnally* [and I add, imagined or conceived of carnally] *can be of no profit for the nourishment of the soul; nor can the flesh of Christ, considered alone, or by any virtue in it, profit. It only profiteth by virtue of the divine nature, which, being personally unite to the human nature, adds all the virtue and merit to the sufferings and acts of the human nature, so as the human nature hath all its quickening and virtue from the divine nature.* The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life: That is, (says he,) *They are spiritual, and such as by the belief of which you may obtain spiritual and eternal life: For, by believing these words, and obeying them, you shall come to believe in me; which is that eating my flesh and drinking my blood which I intended; not any corporeal or carnal eating: That is a very gross conception of yours; neither can any such thing as that do you good.* Now, let any consider, if this be any ways different from my doctrine upon that text. The *Jews* there had gross and carnal conceptions of Christ's flesh or humanity, through unbelief, separating it from his Deity; which led them to gross notions also of eating his flesh. But, if no such thing can do any good, or be of any profit, then the imaginary idea of Christ as man, or in his humanity, which imagination in itself necessarily includes nothing of his Deity, must be a very *carnal and unprofitable thing.* So *Sharpii symphonia Prophetarum & Apostolorum, p.* 352. (I omit the *Latin* for brevity's sake) speaks to this purpose, in reconciling *vers.* 54. and 63. "Flesh considered *absolutely*, as the flesh only of a man, "profiteth nothing; but viewed *relatively*, as the flesh of "the Son of God, it hath a quickening virtue, *&c.* The "flesh of Christ gives life to the world, no otherwise ex- "cept as it is spiritually considered and perceived: For he "who considers nothing in the flesh of Christ but what is "terrestrial or earthly, will find nothing but death in it; "but they who perceive the virtue of the Spirit in that flesh "by faith, will find it to be quickening and life-giving flesh, "*&c.* But it *profiteth nothing*, if it be considered naturally, "in its own original; because, as it was the seed of *Abra-* "*ham*, it was by nature obnoxious to death; and therefore "could not give life, *&c.*" To this purpose *Wilson* in his *Christian Dictionary* hath these words following, explaining *the flesh of Christ:* "That is, either, (1.) Whole Christ, both "Godhead and manhood in one person, with all his bene- "fits, *John* vi. 55. *My flesh is meat i deed*; that is, my-

" ſelf being believed on, a ſynecdoche; (that is, an uſual fi-
" gure of a part for the whole.) (2.) The manhood of Chriſt
" as it is conſidered apart from his Godhead or divine na-
" ture, *John* vi. 63. *The fleſh profiteth nothing*; that is to
" ſay, the human nature of Chriſt is not profitable to us of
" itſelf, but as the Godhead dwells in it, giving life to it,
" and quickening us by it. Thus [ſays he] Mr. *Tindal* and
" the Bible-notes expoſed this place. *Auguſtine* and *Chry-*
" *ſoſtom* expoſed it of underſtanding the word carnally, and
" not ſpiritually. The former is the better, [ſays he;] which
" ſenſe alſo *Auguſtine* allows, *&c.*" *Theodore Beza*'s note upon this place is, " The fleſh of Chriſt does therefore quic-
" ken us, becauſe that he that is man is God. Which my-
" ſtery is only comprehended by faith, which is the gift of
" God, proper only to the elect. *Spirit*; that is, that power
" which flows from the Godhead, cauſes the fleſh of Chriſt,
" which otherwiſe were nothing but fleſh, both to live in it-
" ſelf, and to give life to us." (Where, by the by, to live in itſelf, muſt be underſtood of living in its own divine perſon, namely, the perſon of the Son of God; becauſe Chriſt's humanity hath no other.) Thus *Calvin*, cited by *Marlorat*, on this text ſays, *Whence hath the fleſh any quickening virtue, but becauſe it is ſpiritual?* And he ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe as above. And thus alſo *Muſculus* on the cloſe of the verſe, *The words that I ſpeak, are ſpirit and life: His words received by faith are profitable; but without faith they profit nothing. So the fleſh gives life to none, except it be perceived ſpiritually.*

We can have no communion with Chriſt in his fleſh and blood by any imaginary idea thereof; which is but corporeal. Hence one of the authors in the *Morning exerciſes, vol.* V. ſays, " This communion with Chriſt, and participation
" with him, is ſpiritual and myſtical, by faith, not carnal and
" fleſhly. To imagine any other participation of Chriſt in
" this life but by faith, is to overthrow the goſpel." And, after citing this text, It is *the Spirit that quickens, the fleſh profiteth nothing*, adds, " To look for any other communi-
" cation of Chriſt, or of his fleſh and blood, but *what is ſpiri-*
" *tual, is to contradict him in the interpretation* he gives *of his*
" *own words.*" Now, who to this day ever charged all or any of theſe famed authors with perverting the meaning of that ſcripture, or the blaſphemous interpretation of it? Yet they have given juſt the ſame meaning of it that I gave, only in different words. *Matthæus Flaccus Illyricus*, one of the famed Reformers, ſpeaking of *the fleſh that profiteth nothing*,

thing, cites *Cyrillus* and *Augustine* explaining it of the flesh of Christ its being eaten only carnally, and not by faith; and *Chrysostom* explaining it of *our carnality, not perceiving divine things. Clavis scripturæ, col.* 108. To the same purpose, also the learned *Ravenell*, in his *Thesaurus scripturæ, p.* 397. explains this text, *The flesh profiteth nothing*, "of "the human nature of Christ alone, and separately consider-"ed from the divinity;" and says, "*Chrysostom* expounds "it of carnal hearing, when these things are taken carnally, "which are spoken and ought to be understood mystically "and spiritually." Thus, though I stand condemned by Mr. *Robe*, yet it is with very good company, whom he will never outshine.

The forecited *Symph. Proph. & Apost. p.* 354. says, "The "knowledge of Christ is twofold. (1.) There is a carnal "and historical knowledge; whereby not only the rulers of "the *Jews* and others knew Christ, *John* vii. 26. but also "the devils, *Matth.* viii. *Mark* i. *Luke* iii. and elsewhere: "*Which knowledge profiteth nothing to salvation.* The *second* "is spiritual; which is of faith, and justifies believers: To "which knowledge the *Jews* that crucified Christ, were strangers, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. *John* i. 11. And upon this ignorance "*Peter* excuses the *Jews* and their rulers, *Acts* iii. 17. be-"cause, judging of Christ according to the flesh, they knew "nothing spiritual in him." So indeed it fares with the imaginary idea of Christ as man. There is nothing spiritual therein; and so it can lead to no point of spiritual knowledge: Therefore it deserves to be called, according to *Chrysostom*'s gloss, *The flesh that profiteth nothing.* But most interpreters understand this of the very flesh and human nature of Christ as above. *Theodore Beza*'s *Latin* comment upon the New Testament deserves here to be cited upon this text, "*The flesh* "*profiteth nothing*: That is, [says he,] so far as concerns any "quickening virtue; which is [not of the humanity, but] "only and wholly of the Deity: not that it is unprofitable; "far from it, for it interveens as an absolute accessory or-"gan, and as the only channel out of which the Deity, "which most fully quickened that humanity personally u-"nite to it, does derive that life of his unto us also, who "are unite to him by faith; insomuch that without that flesh "(thus considered) there is no salvation, both in so far as "it was offered for us, and also in as far as it is eaten or "applied

" applied by faith." But it reads far better in the *Latin*; therefore see it at the foot of the page †.

Hutchinson on that text says, " This may be understood " as a clearing of what he said concerning the eating of his " flesh, that it was not a carnal fleshly eating of him that " could profit any thing; but it is a spiritual eating of him by " faith, that brings the quickening and life of which he spoke. " But it seems rather to clear what he had said concerning " the quickening power of his flesh, or human nature. And " by flesh and Spirit we are to understand his divine and hu- " man nature, as *Rom.* i. 3, 4. 1 *Pet.* iii. 18. and so the " meaning is, that however much had been spoken of life to " be given by partaking of his flesh, yet this is not to be " understood of his flesh considered in itself, and without " his Godhead, *as they conceived him to be a mere man*, but " all the quickening virtue that is ascribed to his flesh or hu- " man nature, does flow from his Godhead to which it is u- " nited." Mr. *Obadiah Sedgwick* on the *Covenant*, *p.* 69. says, " The presence of Christ (I mean [says he] his bodi- " ly presence only) was not comfortable without the Spirit: " It is the *Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*; " so Christ speaks *John* vi. 63." Mr. *Robe* must find all these divines chargeable with a blasphemous interpretation of that scripture, ere he can fix his charge against me. But I pray he may be forgiven, because he did it ignorantly, I hope not maliciously.

It is evident from all these authors, their mind and mine harmonise so much upon this text, that they say, upon the matter, that, since Christ as man is not God, the imaginary idea of Christ as man is the most unprofitable thing in the world; and that, in this view, *the flesh profiteth nothing*, because the flesh or humanity is only the organ or *instrument*, but the person Christ, the God-man, is the agent, in redeeming work. And the imaginary idea of flesh (the object of which idea is only corporeal, as Mr. *Robe* himself asserts) necessarily separates the instrument from the agent; and thus makes the instrument unprofitable. So that his imaginary idea, and not my

† *Nihil prodest*, οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ. Nempe quod ad ipsam vivificationis energiam attinet; quæ tota est unicæ Deitatis: non autem quòd sit inutilis; quod absit: intervenit enim ut absolutè necessarium organum, & ut canalis unicus, ex quo Deitas, quæ assumptam illam humanitatem hypostaticè unitam plenissimè vivificavit, in nos quoque ipsi per fidem insitos illam suam vitam derivet. Adeo ut extra illam carnem non sit salus; primùm quatenus pro nobis oblata, deinde quatenus comesa, sive per fidem applicata.

my doctrine, is chargeable with the blasphemy he speaks of, namely, *That the human nature of Christ is unprofitable.* The faith of Christ's person as God-man which I teach, makes the human nature of Christ unspeakably profitable, as it is the great instrument of our reconciliation with God, and eternal salvation, because of its personal union with the divine nature; whereas the imaginary idea of it renders it profitable for nothing.

But I might here add, that, whereas Mr. *Robe* says, "That "the plain and only meaning of this text here, is, to eat "Christ's flesh only as the *Capernaumites* understand him, "namely, with their teeth; and in that sense only it is un- "profitable:" It is certain, they might have some other view of eating his flesh, even though their view at best was carnal. This seems plain from the words which they say about it, vers. 34. *Lord, evermore give us this bread.* Some, particularly *Aretius* thinks, they speak this *ironically:* But the foresaid Dr. *Collings* says, *that most interpreters agree, that they speak this seriously*; that is, that they were willing enough to have such bread, (if any such were to be had.) But yet, they not conceiving aright the nature and excellency of the bread our Saviour mentioned, it is possible, the imaginary idea they had of bread, such as that he fed them with when he multiplied the loaves, and for which they followed him, *vers.* 26. might be one of the reasons why they could not conceive or receive aright this bread of God, which he had been here preaching of to them, *vers.* 27. saying, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life; the bread of God that comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world,* vers. 33. But it is certain, that, when here they say, *Lord, evermore give us this bread,* they could as yet have no notion like that of the *Cannibals,* of eating his flesh with their teeth, for Christ had not yet spoken to them of eating his *flesh.* However, since interpreters differ on this head, it is very presumptuous for Mr. *Robe* to pretend to assign the only sense and meaning, and make himself judge of the controversy; and such a judge, as to determine, upon the matter, that there can be no carnal way of using the flesh of Christ there imported, except that of eating it with the teeth; and as if a carnal way of conceiving of it, were no carnal way of using it: Which yet seems most agreeable to the text and context: For

It is possible, and probable also, that, when Christ came to explain this bread of God, and shew it to be his flesh, then the sensitive idea of his flesh, or of Christ as a present man,

man, which they had before their eyes, was the great reason why they could not conceive aright of this object of faith. As their idea of bread was carnal, while that was spoken of, so as they could not see God therein, nor consequently could believe; so their idea of flesh, when that was spoken of, or his human nature which they saw with their eyes, was carnal; so as they could not see God in him, nor consequently believe that he was the Son of God, and the bread of God. Therefore Christ tells them, that the flesh, as thus viewed by them, *profiteth nothing*, because they did not see the Spirit; that is, (as *Beza* and others explain it,) his eternal Godhead, wherein that flesh, or human nature now subsisted. And indeed this is all the help that an imaginary idea of *Christ as an* absent man can give to faith. It effectually marrs the profitable view of *Christ as God*, or in his person God-man. The flesh of Christ then, as it is the object of an imaginary idea, is of no profit for any of these ends and purposes which Mr. *Robe* himself mentions; because it is not any idea of flesh, or of man, but the person God-man, that is profitable food for faith.

Yet so bold is this dreadful accuser, his following words are remarkable in the same *page*, "What evil hath not contradicting this blessed work led, and is like to lead our brethren into! What befel Christianity at the beginning from "its adversaries, hath befallen this reviving of it. *Contradicting* is attended *with blaspheming*, Acts xiii. 45." *Answer.* (1.) On whose side the charge of blasphemy lands in the point before us, let the world judge from what hath been said. (2.) If the blessed work Mr. *Robe* speaks of, had no better foundation than the imaginary doctrine he publishes in this book, the brethren had all the reason in the world to oppose themselves to such an imaginary work, and all the promoters thereof. God hath said, *Isaiah* v. 20, 21, 24. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness*, &c. *that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.* To speak of the glorious Light of heaven, the Sun of Righteousness his arising, which was Christianity at the beginning, and compare it with what Mr. *Robe* calls the reviving of it at this time, in a work wherein so many imaginary shadows have clouded the minds of a multitude, is such a proud boasting way of putting darkness for light, that it is no wonder God be bringing down the loftiness of such

such boasters, and writing confusion upon the work they have been promoting, and making that blossom to flee up as dust. *Charnock* says well, vol. II. *p.* 434. "*Faith is the evidence* "*of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1.—It is such an evidence as "brings substance along with it, *the substance of things ho-* "*ped for*; it evidences God and Christ, and the things of God "and Christ to be substantial solid things, not doubtful opi- "nions, and imaginary notions. *p.* 218. In this there is "a manifest difference between the working of Satan, and "the operation of God. He sets his batteries against the "affections, because the entry is there easiest. God breaks "in upon the understanding, which, being the chief fort, "will quickly be a means to reduce the lesser citadels.— "When the work begins in removing the blindness, it is "the way to a true conversion. When it begins only in the "affections, it is a prognostick of a quick starting aside." Mr. *Robe* next (*p.* 56 and 57.) endeavours to illustrate the necessity of conceiving of Christ as man; and, from my having spoke of the mystery of faith, that to conceive of Christ as man, is no mystery at all, he instances a branch of the mystery of faith, namely, "To believe *that one of the souldiers with a spear* "*pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and* "*water*. But, [says he] to conceive of this is indeed no my- "stery at all." Here again I must notice, he ignorantly confounds faith and fancy; for he confounds believing by faith, with conceiving by an imaginary idea. The former is still a mystery, even in that instance; but the latter is none. Does Mr. *Robe* think there is no mystery in believing that Christ's side was pierced? Indeed, as it is the object of sense or fancy, or an imaginary idea, it is no mystery: No man needs have it inculcate upon him to conceive of it thus; for it is natural to all mankind, when ever they hear of a side pierced with a spear, presently to know what it means, and have the idea of it. But, as it is the object of faith, it is so mysterious, that no imaginary idea can reach up to it, any more than it can reach up to the height of the Old Testament prophecy, that Christ should be pierced, and thence, comparing it with the New Testament accomplishment, fall in with the design of that promise, *Zech.* xii. 10. *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn.* Again, is there no mystery in believing, that *forthwith came there out blood and water*, as Mr. *Robe* thinks? Indeed there is no mystery either in seeing this with the eye, or fancying it in the imagination. These are merely natural acts. But, as it is the object of faith, since the Spirit of God hath told us of

ſuch ſpiritual myſteries included in this *water and blood*, 1 *John* v. 6. which I cannot take time to enlarge upon, it is a wonder to me, to hear a Miniſter ſpeaking ſo much in the clouds of darkneſs, as to ſuppoſe there is nothing of the myſtery of faith here! Nay, I muſt tell Mr. *Robe*, that whatever truth he can ſpeak of in the Bible, if it relate to any corporeal thing, and ſo can be both the object of ſenſe and the object of faith, as it is the object of ſenſe and of an imaginary idea, it is no myſtery, no part of the object of faith; and as it is the object of faith, it cannot be the object of ſenſe or fancy: For truth hath no bodily ſhape for ſenſe or fancy to work upon.

This anſwers the following queſtion of Mr. *Robe*, "Is not "the conceiving of Chriſt as man, neceſſary to faith, as it "is a part of the object of faith?" For to conceive of him as man by an imaginary idea, is to conceive of no part of the object of faith; becauſe that idea can conſider his human nature no otherwiſe than in itſelf, nor of him otherwiſe than as a mere man. Beſides, the perſon of Chriſt as the the object of faith is not diviſible into parts, as if the human nature were one part of it, and the divine nature another. What groſs divinity this is, I have ſhewed elſewhere. In this it may be ſaid, as in another caſe, *Is Chriſt divided*? No.

Mr. *Robe* here ſpeaks of another poſition of mine, namely, "To conceive of Chriſt as man, and yet at the ſame time "to conceive of him, and to receive him as God-man; are "flat contradictions." To which he anſwers, "To conceive "of him as mere man, excluding all other conception of him, "and to conceive of him and receive him at the ſame time "as God-man, would be a flat contradiction. But who ſaith "this? No man ever did, that I know of. But to conceive "of him as man, and yet at the ſame time to conceive of "him and receive him as God-man, is no contradiction; "becauſe the conceiving of him as man, is a part of the con"ception of him as God-man, and without which we can"not receive him as God-man, unleſs we receive what we "have, and ſhould have no conception of." Now, here is ſtrange philoſophy, and as ſtrange divinity. (1.) That to conceive of Chriſt as man, is a part of the conception of him as God-man. Surely no philoſopher will allow this nonſenſe. To conceive of Chriſt as man, is by an imaginary idea; which, according to Mr. *Robe*, hath no other object but corporeal. To conceive of Chriſt as God-man, is only by faith. Hence to ſay, the one is a part of the other, is as good ſenſe, as to ſay, that ſenſe is a part of faith; or that man

man who is the object of fancy, is a part of God, who is the object of faith. Nay, but perhaps Mr. *Robe* thinks that man is a part of the God-man. Why then, (2.) What strange divinity is this, to suppose, that man is a part of the person God-man, when it is sure the person of Christ hath no parts? But then how shall Mr. *Robe*'s reason be answered, which he gives for the conceiving of Christ as man, its being a part of the conception of him as God-man, namely, *That, without this conception of him as man, we cannot conceive of him as God-man; because we cannot receive him as God-man without it, unless we receive what we have, and should have no conception of.* To this I answered before; and therefore only say, That, if the proper object of faith be what we can have a natural conception of, as we have of a man, then the proper object of faith would not be God or God-man in one person; for of this object we can have no conception but by faith. But Mr. *Robe* may suppose, that the human nature is conceivable, but the divine nature and divine person of Christ is inconceivable; and therefore there must at least be an imaginary idea for the conceivable part of Christ. But this will not do; for the human nature of Christ is no part of his person, because his person is one, and not divisible into parts †: And therefore his human nature as well as his divine must be considered and conceived, as subsisting no other way but in the divine person of the Son of God; and hence his humanity as thus subsisting, is as far from being conceivable by sense and imagination as his Deity: And consequently an imaginary idea of it is nothing but a vain imagination. It is true, the human nature is conceivable, considered in itself; and Mr. *Robe* is obliged, in this same page, to own, that there is no mystery in conceiving the human nature considered in itself: And hence he must own, that this human nature considered in itself, is no part of the object of faith, or of that inconceivably great mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*; and that, however the human nature of Christ in itself, as visible and material, may be the object of sense, sight, vision or imagination, as I said; yet it cannot, as such, be the object of faith, but only as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby: And consequently, that faith is

† *Maccovii regulæ theol. & philos. p.* 111. Aliud est in Christo *persona*, aliud adjunctum ἐνυπόστατον. Persona est sola divina natura non; enim sentiendum est personam Christi quasi conflari ex humana & divina natura, ac quasi ex partibus constitui; sed quòd divina natura sit sola persona, quæ in suam personalitatem assumpsit humanam naturam; humana verò natura est adjunctum ἐνυπόστατον.

ſtill *the evidence of things* properly *not ſeen,* and only *a ſeeing of* him *that is inviſible.*

I muſt own and acknowledge, that, while I write upon this ſpeculative ſubject, I am conſcious to myſelf of ſo many vain imaginations of my own, that I am obliged to write againſt myſelf as well as Mr. *Robe*, and my own imaginary ideas as well as his. But, for the ſake of truth, and for the honour of our great Redeemer, I muſt bear witneſs againſt all ſinful thoughts of him as man wherever they lodge: Therefore I muſt ſay, that to conceive of Chriſt as man in Mr. *Robe*'s ſenſe, is a ſinful erroneous and blaſphemous conception. It is an act of the higheſt ingratitude to our Redeemer, to degrade him from his Deity, becauſe he hath aſſumed our humanity. To conceive of him as man, by forming an image of his manhood in our mind, is, in my opinion, as really ſinful and idolatrous, as to form an image of his Godhead in our mind; becauſe the man Chriſt is really God; but Chriſt as man is not: Therefore to conceive of him as man by an imaginary idea, is to conceive of him not as God. Chriſt the Son of God, by aſſuming our human nature, hath come ſo near unto us, as to render himſelf more conceivable to our *faith*, than his abſolute Deity could be. He hath aſſumed our nature into ſuch a perſonal union with himſelf, as is not inconſiſtent with his being what he ever was, and is, and will be, *God over all bleſſed for ever.* And it is enough, and more than ever men or angels could have expected, that it can be ſaid, that *God is become man like one of* us, and *the man is God*; becauſe the manhood exiſts in the Godhead of the Son; and ſo is fitted to be the object of the *faith* of men, and only of their faith. But to debaſe therefore his perſon, in which his manhood exiſts, ſo as to conceive of him as man in Mr. *Robe*'s way, and of his manhood as of other men, is a ſinful and a ſhameful degrading him from his Deity; becauſe he married our humanity, and betrothed it to himſelf for ever: Which was in effect a ſaying of us and our nature, *I will betroth them unto me for ever*; and which, inſtead of tempting us to dethrone him, ſhould teach us to exalt him, as the Father doth, with this proclamation; *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, Heb. i. 8.

I had ſaid, that *faith will never be acted by believers to any advantage, till it get itſelf ſhaken looſe of that unprofitable mate, the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man.* To which Mr. *Robe* ſays, "Saving faith will never get itſelf rid of this "abſolutely neceſſary prerequiſite, the conception of Chriſt as "man." If this be true, then it may be made a matter of

prayer

prayer to God that he would give it; and how would this prayer sound in the ears of any that know the mystery of the gospel, *Lord, since it is not possible for me to believe, that thou art God-man without this absolutely necessary prerequisite, the conception of thee as man, therefore help me to conceive of thee as man, that this conception may help me to conceive of thee as God-man in one person!* If the question be, what conception of me as man do ye seek? The answer Mr. *Robe* gives, *p.* 31. is, "Even to think of thee as man, "by the exercise of the same faculties and powers wherewith "I think and conceive of other men." If any true believers shall say, this prayer is dreadful; for I find too much of that already, I cannot get rid of an imaginary idea of Christ as man: Nay, but says Mr. *Robe*, This *belongs to the knowledge of Christ as God-man*, that you have the same knowledge of him as man, that you have of other men. Could Mr. *Robe*, in the face of him who says, *I am God, and there is none else*, venture to pray for that which is the vain object of every man's imagination? Is this a part of knowledge to be sought of God?

Mr. *Robe* also (*p*, 57.) says, "That without the conce-"ption of Christ as man, faith could not be the evidence "of these things that are invisible and not seen, because of "their absence and distance from us." Here is a strange view of faith, as *it is the evidence of things not seen.* Mr. *Robe* may at least own, that the human nature of Christ was never visible, till it was assumed: But faith was the evidence of things not seen, before ever the Son of God was incarnate; for that text *Heb.* xi. 1. speaks of the faith of the Old Testament saints; but their imaginary idea of Christ as man, could neither be of a man properly absent, or present, but future. *Abraham*'s faith *saw Christ afar of*, when yet his human nature was neither visible in earth, nor in heaven. But whatever thing is visible, absence does not make it invisible in itself; and whether it be present or absent, past or future, if it be visible, it is not properly the object of faith, but fancy. Fancy may make it present and visible, by a figure or image of it in the brain. And, if that fancy helps to make faith the evidence of things not seen, then it helps faith by destroying the nature of faith; that is, by turning faith from being a view of Christ in the word to be a vision of him in the head. Of this it seems Mr. *Robe* speaks; for, in the following words, he seems to explain faith, and explain it away, by making the beatifick vision in heaven to ly in a conception of Christ as man, when there will be no faith. His words are: "A

"con-

" conception of Christ as man will remain when faith will " be no more; for *we shall see him as he is.*" And in this he hath so far confirmed part of my words which he hath been fighting against; namely, that that part of Christ, for I may speak of a part of him, when I speak in Mr. *Robe*'s language, of an imaginary idea of him as man; I say then as before, *That that part of Christ which is visible, was the object of sense on earth, is the object of vision in heaven, and may be the object of any man's fancy and imagination; but never was, nor will be the object of faith, but as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby*: So far, I say, he here speaks for me, by saying the conception of Christ as man will remain, when faith will be no more. But, as this conception and faith will be separate in heaven, so they are as far separate from one another on earth. For faith is no carnal nor natural conception of Christ as man, but a spiritual and believing view of him as God and man in one divine person. I am ashamed therefore to take even the help Mr. *Robe* gives me; because I do not allow the vision of Christ in heaven to be what he calls it, or makes essential to it: For I think it will not at all consist in a conception of Christ as man; for to conceive of him thus, is nothing like *seeing him as he is.* As man he is not God; whereas *to see him as he is,* is to see him to be God, and God-man in one person, not by faith, but by immediate vision. No such thing will be there as an imaginary idea of Christ as man. But, after the resurrection, when Christ shall have *changed our vile bodies, and made them like unto his own glorious body,* not only shall *every eye see Christ, when he comes in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,* but particularly the redeemed shall, with the *eyes of their bodies* see the *glorious body* of the Redeemer; which will be sweet *sense* with a witness, not faith: But with the eyes of their souls and perfectly glorified understandings they will see him, and conceive of him, *not as man,* but as God and man in one person; *for they shall see him as he is,* or see him to be what he is, namely, the person God-man. And therefore in this person they will see God, and all the glory of God for ever; for what they now see through *the glass of the word by faith,* they will then see immediately *face to face.*

Mr. *Robe* adds, " Let the reader observe Mr. *Erskine*'s cun- " ning in citing two scriptures, as if he was proving his pro- " position by them; to which they have not the least ten- " dency. This is to deceive the simple." My proposition was, " That till faith get itself shaken loose of that unprofi- " table

" table mate, *the imaginary idea of Christ as man,* it will " never believe to any profit or advantage, nor believe either " *to the saving of the soul,* Heb. x. 39. or to *the giving glo-* " *ry to God, Rom.* iv. 20." The question then is, If these two scriptures have no manner of tendency to prove my position? Indeed I think they prove it beyond all contradiction; and I give my reasons, namely, because, as long as a believer hath no better company than this unprofitable mate, *the imaginary idea of Christ as man,* he will never see any salvation to the soul in him, more than in another man; nor see the glory of God in him, more than in another man, according as Mr. *Robe* hath formerly explained himself: Yea not so much will he see in this unhappy mate, as he may see in a living man upon earth; especially if he be a good man or a saint, whom God can make an instrument of salvation to him, and in whom he may see something of the image of God: But in this dead idol and image of Christ as man formed in his brain by imagination, he can see nothing but what is unprofitable to man, and dishonouring to God, as all vain imaginations are; and this in a special manner, because it stands so directly opposite to the true Christ, and the true object of faith as represented to us only in the glorious gospel. The object of an imaginary idea includes nothing but what is corporeal, as Mr. *Robe* confesses; therefore it includes nothing that properly relates, either to the salvation of the soul, or to the glory of God; for none of these are corporeal, but spiritual things.

SECT. XI.

Pag. 57. at the foot, Mr. *Robe* says, " There follows a dread- " ful perversion of two scriptures." Which scriptures I had mentioned in the following manner. " What can be thought " then of this doctrine of imaginary ideas? I fear it belongs " to that sort of philosophy which the Spirit of God warns " us against, *Col.* ii. 8. *Beware lest any man spoil you through* " *philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, af-* " *ter the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.* God " says, *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within you?* And " such is the abstract notion and vain imagination of Christ's " humanity, or of Christ as man." Now, says Mr. *Robe,* " The one [of these scriptures] speaks against vain philoso- " phy, the other against vain subterfuges. Therefore they " speak against such ideas as the understanding hath of cor- " poreal absent things, by the help of the imagination. Have

" these

" theſe men, in making a ſeceſſion from the church of *Scotland*, " made alſo a ſeceſſion from common ſenſe?" To which I anſwer, (1.) That this doctrine of imaginary ideas brought in by Mr. *Robe*, as belonging to the knowledge of this great myſtery of godlineſs, *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, belongs only to vain philoſophy, I ſuppoſe I have made evident in this book; and conſequently that ſcripture is not perverted, but adduced to the purpoſe in hand. (2.) If the other ſcripture relating to vain thoughts, ſpeaks of vain ſubterfuges, then it is moſt ſuitably adduced in oppoſition to this doctrine of imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man, which Mr. *Robe* and others advance, as a plain evaſion, and ſhift or ſubterfuge, for the defence of that imaginary and deluſive work, wherein ſo many have been groſly deluded with the fancy of their ſeeing Chriſt as man, inſtead of the ſaving faith of the perſon God-man, exhibite in the goſpel. And of all *vain thoughts* this ſeems to be the moſt dangerous; becauſe it is a corporeal repreſentation of an object that is moſt ſpiritual and ſublime. For to abſtract from the ſpiritual conſideration of Chriſt's humanity, as ſubſiſting in the perſon of the Son of God, and to make it the object of an idea, that can ſee it no otherwiſe but in a corporeal image, is a corrupting and defiling one of the moſt pure myſteries of faith, with our moſt vain and vile imaginations. And as we uſe to ſay, *Corruptio optimi peſſima, The abuſe of the beſt things is the worſt abuſe*, ſo *vain thoughts* about this ſubject are moſt vile thoughts, and moſt pernicious and deſtructive alſo, in ſo far as they are not bewailed and condemned, but entertained, vindicated and defended. (3.) It is ſcarce worth my while to anſwer Mr. *Robe*'s queſtion here, *Have theſe men, in making a ſeceſſion from the church of* Scotland, *made alſo a ſeceſſion from common ſenſe?* Only, as he miſrepreſents our ſeceſſion, which was never from the church of *Scotland*, but from the preſent judicatories, becauſe of their ſeceſſion from the true reformed covenanted mother-church of *Scotland*, to which our adherence in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government is manifeſt; ſo our brethren that formerly ſeemed as zealous as we, their ſeceſſion from the true mother-church, and remaining involved in the defections of the time, as this hath contributed little to their credit; ſo their falling in with the deluſions of the time hath added as little to their *common ſenſe*.

In the following paragraph, *p.* 58. Mr. *Robe* ſays, " There " is nothing here but what I have touched, and I think ſhewn " the weakneſs and ſophiſtry of, except that he [Mr. *Erskine*] " ſaith, *That Chriſt, in forbidding* Mary *to touch him, when*

" *he*

" *he appeared to her after his resurrection, forbids, us to have* " *any idea or conception of him as man, which he saith is* " *a mere mental handling of his body.* To propose this, is " to expose it, and answer enough; for it is just as perti- " nent, as it would have been to have said, Christ forbids " us to think of him as man, because he asked, *Luke* viii. 45. " *Who touched me?*" *Answer.* Mr. *Robe* needs not boast of his common sense, when he hath exposed it so much here, as I shall shew in the following particulars.

1. His comparing Christ's words to *Mary, Touch me not,* with his words relating to the woman with the bloody issue, that touched the hem of his garment, and was healed, when inquiring about her, and saying, *Who touched me?* and his speaking of these as if they were any way similar, is most unworthy of, and unbecoming a Minister of the gospel: For the former was a *carnal touch* of sense, that Christ *forbad*; the latter was a *spiritual touch of faith,* that he inquires about, in order to *commend* it. So that the one text is just as distant in meaning from the other, as fancy and faith are: Which here are so miserably confounded, as that to relate this answer of Mr. *Robe*'s is enough indeed to refute it. But,

2. That it is a carnal touching of Christ's body that Christ here forbids to *Mary,* and, therein, also all carnal imaginations about his human body, is not my mind only, but of the greatest divines I know. *Symph. Proph. & Apost.* says upon this text, *Tangi à Maria Christus noluit, quia nihil nisi carnalia respiciebat:* Christ would not be touched by *Mary,* because she was minding only carnal things. Dr. *Owen* on the *Spirit, p.* 10. hath these words: " They would have " been again embracing his human nature, and rejoicing in " it. But, as Christ said to *Mary, Touch me not,* John xx. " 17. TO WEAN HER FROM ANY CARNAL CONSIDERATION OF " HIM; so he instructs them all now to look after, and trust " unto the promise of the Holy Ghost. Hence is that of the A- " postle, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now* " *henceforth know we him no more,* 2 Cor. v. 16." Till I occasionally looked to this passage, I did not know that Dr. *Owen* had expressed himself almost in my very words, as well as in my meaning upon this text.

The absence or presence of Christ's human nature makes no alteration in the least upon the proper act or object of faith, unless it be supposed, that the absence thereof contributes rather to the help of faith; because then faith has not the disadvantage of a sensible object interveening between it and the proper, invisible, compleat, and spiritual object of

it, namely, Christ as God-man, in one invisible personality. On which account the learned *Beza*, whom afterwards I shall cite, said the same of Christ's external and carnal presence that I say of internal and carnal ideas and conceptions of it, *viz.* that *plurimum officiebat*, It was a very great hinderance and obstacle to faith †.

If his removing from his disciples as to his bodily presence had been a disadvantage to faith, then it would never have been *expedient for them, that he should go away:* But he has told us the expediency thereof, because of the Spirit of faith, his coming to fill up that room to advantage. The absence of Christ as to his human nature is no hinderance, but rather a furtherance to faith; because the person of Christ, the God-man, is as much present to faith, as if his human body were on earth, in our sight and in our arms; in which case, we might be ready to mistake, and think we saw and embraced the person, while, instead thereof, we would only see and hug the human body of Christ by sense. They that believed in Christ when they saw him bodily present on earth, his human body was as distant from their faith, as now when we believe in an exalted Christ. And they that now believe in an exalted Christ, have his human nature as near to their faith as they had who saw him in the flesh; yea, as near as the beloved disciple, that leaned on his bosom. The reason is, because the object of faith is the person God-man, who is equally present every where. But the human body of Christ, which (as I said in my quarrelled *Appendix)* was the object of sight on earth, and will be the object of vision in heaven, never was nor will be the object of faith, but as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby. A whole Christ is nearer to our faith in the word, than if his human body were in our arms, as it was once in old *Simeon*'s: And therefore we are directed neither to *ascend* or look up to *heaven*, and form in our mind the image of a man there, by an imaginary idea; nor to *descend to the deep*, to fancy or suppose him as a man upon earth; but to look toward the true Christ as represented *in the word of faith*, whereby he is nearer to our faith, than he can be any other way, *even in our mouth and in our heart*, Rom. x. 8.

The multitude pressed upon Christ when the woman with the bloody issue touched the hem of his garment, and was made whole. I would ask Mr. *Robe* a question here, when the

† *Pet. Martyr.* loc. com. p. 155. Si carnis Christi aspectus præsentiâ ejus, quoad carnem, impedit, quo minùs Spiritus ejus accipiatur; quanto magis de imaginibus ejus affirmandum erit?

the multitude pressed upon his body, did they touch his person? Or, when they touched his body, did they touch the object of faith? What they saw and touched, was the object of sense; but, as it was outwardly visible and tangible, was it the object of faith, or helpful to it? If that were so, then, according to this carnal doctrine, they got a better touch of him than the woman with the bloody issue; for she did not touch his body at all, but only the hem of his garment, though yet Christ says, *Who touched me?* and also, *Some body hath touched me.* Nay, but her touch of faith was another thing, as one of the fathers said on this head, *Turba premit, fides tangit: The multitude pressed, but faith touched.* If Christ were bodily on earth, and a man should get his body in his arms, if he wanted *Simeon*'s faith, he would be as far from the object of faith, as he is just now, when his body is in heaven; and consequently as far from it, as the man that has but an imaginary idea in his head of Christ's exalted body now in heaven: For to have that body as such, whether really present to *sense*, or imaginatively present to *fancy*, is equally distant from the proper object of *faith*.

Aretius, in his *Latin* comment upon *John*, speaks likewise to the following purpose upon this text, *Touch me not:* "There "is a twofold touching of Christ. The first is a bodily touch- "ing of him, such as *Thomas* got, and others, *Matth.* xxviii. "9. *John* xx. 27, 28. This touch was here denied to *Mary*, "because she was too much set upon it. Neither by itself, "or of itself, can it profit the toucher; for so the souldiers, "and *Judas*, and crucifiers of Christ, touched him unprofi- "tably. *2dly*, There is a spiritual touching of him, when "by faith we are joined to him, obey him, imitate him, and "take care to be really, as well as nominally Christians: "Those who thus touch him, do touch him rightly and pro- "fitably. This is the touch of all the faithful since Christ's "ascension; and the same was common to saints before "his ascension; and Christ calls *Mary* off from the corpo- "real to the spiritual touching of him." *Beza*, upon the text, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended*, says, "What then, "might any touch him after he is ascended? Yea surely; but "in a spiritual way, and with minds carried upward by faith: "Which is the only saving way of apprehending his flesh, and "of which that *external and carnal presence of his was a great* "*hinderance.* —— From these words of Christ men may be "taught, that the carnal way of eating Christ, which they de- "fend with so much obstinacy, is not only imaginary, but also "diametrically opposite to the word and institution of God."

Henry, on that word of Christ to *Mary*, *Touch me not*, says, " He forbids her to dote upon his bodily presence, to set her " heart upon that, to expect the continuance of that; and " leads her to that spiritual converse and communion which " she should have with him after he was ascended to his " Father. —— *Mary* thought now her matter was to set up a " temporal kingdom, such as they had long promised to them- " selves. No says Christ, touch me not *with any such* " *thoughts.*" ——— It seems *Henry* and these other writers, judged as much as I, that Christ here forbids all carnal handling of Christ, whether bodily or mental.

Hutchinson, on that word, *Touch me not*, says, " It seems " to import a reproof of her carnal disposition, who doted " on his bodily presence, and delighted to be touching him, " ——that he would not be enjoyed in a carnal, corporeal " manner; but she is to expect and wait till his ascension, " and then she and the rest might tryst with, and touch him, " not bodily, but spiritually by faith. —— Christ being now " exalted, it requires much spiritual converse with him, and " that we do not expect a carnal or bodily presence; it be- " ing the woful fruit of carnal dispositions, that because men " cannot ascend up to Christ by faith, therefore they fancy " a carnal and bodily presence of Christ on earth with them, " *&c.*"

What then can make my explaining that text, *Touch me not*, as prohibiting a mental handling of Christ's body, as well as corporeal embracements of it, and an inwardly carnal mind, as well as outwardly carnal manners, relating to his human body; what I say, can make this explication so uneasy to Mr. *Robe*? Why? He is conscious that it condemns evidently his imaginary idea of Christ as man; which he says, " If " it be according to the word, as is always understood, will " neither lead us to a false Christ, nor a false faith." What he means by supposing it may be according to the word, I cannot understand. The word tells us this truth, That Christ is man as well as God; and faith can feed upon it as it is a truth in the word, and so a spiritual, not a corporeal object. But will the word of God warrant any person to alter the image of this truth in the word, and turn it to the image of a man in the brain? If not, then an imaginary idea of Christ as man, cannot possibly be according to the word, but directly opposite to it: And therefore such an imaginary idea leads to nothing else but a false Christ and a false faith.

Nay, but saith Mr. *Robe*, " This imaginary idea is so ne- " cessary, that faith, in receiving the Mediator, can no more " be

" be acted without it, than without knowledge." Answer. We use to say, *Comparisons are odious.* Such indeed is the comparing of that carnal idea with spiritual knowledge. I have elsewhere shewed, that an imaginary idea of Christ as man is no part of Christian knowledge; nay rather, when compared to it, it is a part of our natural darkness and gross ignorance. For illustrating this farther, that place of scripture may be considered, *Mark* viii. 18, 19, 20, 21. Christ says to his disciples, *Having eyes, see ye not?* ——*When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. When seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Seven.* They did not want an imaginary idea of loaves, and baskets and fragments; but yet they wanted knowledge and understanding relating to the miracle: Therefore Christ says to them, vers. 21. *How is it that ye do not understand?* As if he had said, That imaginary idea and remembrance ye have of loaves and baskets, imports no more knowledge or understanding than a young child may have that is not come to the use of reason or intellectual knowledge. Spiritual understanding and faith are not conversant about these objects of sense and imagination, which are merely material and corporeal. How is it that ye do not understand the invisible power that effectuated these miracles, and the invisible ability I have to make provision for you, though *ye have no bread*, vers. 16, 17. now along with you? Thus it is evident, the loaves and baskets of which they had the imaginary idea, were no part of the proper object of faith or spiritual understanding in this miraculous discovery Christ made of himself, otherwise he would not have challenged them for having no understanding; that is, no view of the invisible God, or of the glory of his power and mercy in this miraculous work. And thus it is with all other material or corporeal objects as such, that may be, or are the objects of every man's imaginary idea; they are no part of the object of faith or spiritual knowledge, but in so far as the invisible God, or invisible and spiritual things, are seen in and by them. The imaginary notion or fancy relating to the gross outward materials, is in itself no part or branch even of rational knowledge. While we are in this world, we can perform no spiritual act, without having our bodies and natural senses attending: And hence I might argue, Mr. *Robe* and I cannot preach a sermon without our bodies; therefore a body is an absolutely necessary prerequisite unto right preaching, because we can no more preach without

out the body, than without the Bible. ——— Who would not ſmile at ſuch learned argumentation? Yet ſuch is that of Mr. *Robe*'s here, when he ſaith, *That ſaving faith in Chriſt can no more be acted without an imaginary idea of him as man, than without knowledge:* For an imaginary idea relates at the beſt only to the knowledge of natural bodies; but that ſpiritual knowledge, without which faith cannot be acted, relates to the knowledge of ſpiritual beings, ſpiritual truths, ſpiritual myſteries; of which no image or figure can be formed in the mind by imagination, without contracting the guilt of ſpiritual idolatry, by carnal thoughts of Chriſt, or ſeeking to know him after the fleſh†. And therefore what Mr. *Robe* calls a very profane prayer, was a very neceſſary and ſcriptural prayer, *viz. That the Lord would in mercy deliver us from it; for our ſenſes and imagination can give us little help.* This laſt clauſe "appears falſe [ſays Mr. *Robe*] from what "hath already been ſaid, and will farther by what followeth." The thing then which he thinks he hath proven, and is to prove falſe, is, *That our ſenſes and imagination can give us little help*, namely, in drawing us out of this mire of ſpiritual idolatry. I am ſo much afraid that ſenſe and imagination holds us in it, inſtead of drawing us out of it, that I would incline to another form of prayer upon this head, though Mr. *Robe* ſhould alſo call it a profane one, *viz. That the Lord would deliver us from all the help that our ſenſes and imagination can give us.*

Mr. *Robe* proceeds (*p.* 58, 59, 60, 61.) to prove what help our ſenſes and imagination give toward the knowledge of God, and to refute Mr. *Fiſher* and me, as he thinks, for aſſerting the contrary. I fear I would tire my readers patience to repeat all that Mr. *Robe* ſays there. Only he cannot accuſe me of wronging his words, ſince I refer to the pages. I might write at as great length on this as the reſt; but, for brevity's ſake, I confine myſelf to a few remarks on this head.

As hitherto he hath been confounding faith with fancy; ſo, upon this ſubject here, he ſeems to confound ſenſe with reaſon,

† *Symphonia Prophet. & Apoſt. p.* 448. In 2 *Cor.* v. 16. Nunc non ampliùs Chriſtum cognoſcimus ſecundùm carnem. ——— Non de Chriſto ipſo ut homine, licet perfectiſſimo, cogitemus, qualis, ſcilicet, tunc erat, cum in terris verſaretur; ſed eum nunc ut penitus cœleſtem & glorioſum conſideramus, ac proinde jam potiùs vitâ cæleſti quàm terreſtri vivamus: qui enim Chriſto inſitus eſt, factus eſt prorſus novus homo; ideoque cœleſtia non terreſtria meditatur. *p.* 319. Docet [Chriſtus] ſe non verè cognoſci ſecundùm carnem.

reason, or the sensitive with the rational part of man. 'Tis evident in the forecited pages how Mr. *Robe*, for his own defence, varies the phrase of his speech. He had said, "Our senses and imagination are greatly *helpful* to bring us "to the knowledge of the divine nature and perfections, as "he is wise, powerful, *&c.*" And how doth he explain this? Why, says he, "Is it not by the *intervention* of our "senses and imagination, that we know these visible things, "whereby we are taught these invisible things, and perfecti- "ons of God, that are the object of faith, and not of sense." And hence he argues, "How can this agree with Mr. *Fi-* "*sher*'s assertion, *That our senses and imagination cannot assist* "*us at all in thinking upon the divine nature and perfecti-* "*ons?* And how can Mr. *Erskine*'s assertion, *That the light* "*of nature, and works of creation, teach us, that God is, and* "*that he must be clothed with these perfections*; how can this "agree with, or rather must it not be in flat contradiction "to what the Apostle says, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11, 12, 13. *The things* "*of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God? &c.*" Thus he retorts my words upon me, and bids me answer myself, supposing I am engaged in the same contradiction wherein I supposed him to be involved, when he said, that Mr. *Fisher*'s assertion was in flat contradiction to what the Apostle *Paul* says, *Rom.* i. 20. Now, I think 'tis evident to me, that Mr. *Robe* hath by no means cleared himself. For,

Though it be by the intervention of our senses and imagination that we know these visible things; yet doth it hence follow, that our senses and imagination are great helps and assistants to us in the knowledge of the invisible things of God, or his divine nature and perfections? Here then he ascribes the knowledge of what is knowable of God by the light of nature, unto sense and imagination, or to mere bodily powers and faculties, instead of ascribing it unto natural reason and reflexion, or intellectual powers; without which sense and imagination of themselves can no more help men to the knowledge of the invisible God, than they can help the brute beasts that want reason, and yet have bodily senses and imaginations. Sense and imagination may sometimes give occasion to a man that hath reason, and the exercise of it, to exert his rational powers upon spiritual and invisible things; but they can give no help and assistance thereto, no more than hands and feet can help a man to speak, or eyes and ears help him to think, reason, and argue, when he wants the exercise of judgment. The outward senses and imagination are indeed greatly helpful to the knowledge of visible

visible and corporeal things: These only are within that sphere. But to make them greatly helpful to the knowledge of God, his nature and perfections, and of spiritual and invisible things, is to exalt sense to the throne of reason, to invert the order of nature, and make the body animate the soul in effect, or the bodily eye helpful to see what only the rational soul or intellectual eye can help us to see; such as *the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20. In the glass of the visible creation, here our senses and imagination help to nothing, but to the viewing of corporeal objects, or what is visible; which is no help at all to see what is invisible, or to know the divine nature and perfections. The intellectual faculty can only help to this by reflexion and rational deductions. I know no help that the imaginative faculty could give here, unless it were to form in the mind some visible image or corporeal figure of these incorporeal and invisible things; which is dreadful help, leading to idolatry. The reason is, the stream can rise no higher than the fountain. Sense can rise no higher than to things within its own sphere. If the mind have any image formed into it by the help and assistance of sense and imagination, it must be only some visible or corporeal images, which are the direct opposite of invisible and spiritual things. Therefore sense and imagination cannot assist us in the knowledge of the invisible God and his perfections. Sense helps us only to see visible things. To carry its help farther, is to make it the instrument of idolatry, by turning invisible things into visible, and spiritual things into corporeal, or spirit into body, by giving them bodily figures in the mind.

2. The light of natural reason is the only instrument whereby man may see God in the creature, *Rom.* i. 20. Therefore I said before, *That the heavens declare the glory of God. The light of nature, and works of creation, teach the* quod sit, *or that God is, or that he is clothed with such perfections as these works declare; but not the* quid sit, *or what he is.* This I assign to a faculty that acts in a higher sphere than reason itself, namely, divinely supernatural faith in and upon a divine supernatural revelation, according to 1 *Cor.* ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. and many other places of scripture. The distinction I thus made between knowing that God is, and what he is, is maintained by the concurring voice of Protestant authors. Mr. *Anthony Burgess* tells us so, *Vind. leg. p.* 76. "Question, "Whether a man by the light of nature, and by the consider- "ration of the creatures can come to know that there is a "God? This [saith he] is denied by *Socinians* and others.

Indeed

" Indeed *Bellarmine* charges tenets to this effect upon *Cal-*
" *vin.* But that which the Protestant authors hold is, That
" he may indeed have the knowledge, *that* there is a God;
" but *what* this God is, whether he be one, and what his at-
" tributes are, they cannot so reach to: *Nihil Deo notius,*
" *nihil ignotius.*" i. e. *Nothing is more known, nothing more unknown than God.*

Arrowsmith, on *John* i. *p.* 295. says, " Reason hath but three
" ways by which it comes to the knowledge of God; and these
" are known to *scholars* by these names, *via causalitatis,*
" *via remotionis, & via eminentiæ, &c. &c.*"— On the first he says, " Reason discovers a God, but not what God is in his
" being, only that he is; for no effect can shew the nature of
" its cause fully, but either such as manifesteth the whole
" force of the cause, or else such as is not of the same kind
" with the cause; as burning, that shews the nature of the
" fire.——A child shews the nature of the father, because of
" the same nature with the father: But the creatures cannot
" shew God; because they are of effects different from him:
" —— Neither are they of the same rank and kind with God,
" as the child is with the father. They are all of them finite,
" God is infinite. So that all that reason can do this way,
" is, to gather, *that* there is a God, but not *what* he is, &c."

Maastricht, a learned divine and philosopher both, in his disputes against the *Cartesian* ideas of God, as he shews how the natural knowledge of God is not from any innate idea or image of God, but from the very being or essence of God, coexistent with the understanding; so he makes remarkable use of the above distinction that I made, in answer to the *Cartesian* argument drawn from that vulgar maxim, *That nothing is in the understanding that is not first in the senses.* But his words on this subject, being only for the learned, I refer them to the foot of the page †. Mr. *Robe* would fain father his

 doctrine

† Porro, 3. distinguendum quoque hîc existimamus inter rei *existentiam*, & ejusdem *essentiam*: adeoque licet res quoad suam *essentiam* non possit esse in intellectu quin fuerit in sensibus; omnino videtur asserendum attamen, rei *existentiam* posse esse in intellectu, quæ nunquam fuerit in sensibus. Quamvis enim formæ substantiales (loquor ex hypothesibus Peripateticorum, de quorum effato hîc agitur) quoad *essentiam* seu *quidditatem* suam non sunt in intellectu nostro, quia nunquam fuerunt in sensibus; attamen quoad *existentiam* seu *quoddditatem* (barbarismis scholasticis Cartesiani sunto, quæso, propitii) omnino sunt in intellectu: quamvis enim nesciat intellectus quid sit forma canis, bovis, asini, à parte sui, novit tamen, ex effectis, cani, bovi, adesse suam formam substantialem, prorsus ad eundem modum quo ex fumo colligo *existentiam* seu præsentiam

doctrine upon the Scripture, That our senses and imagination are greatly helpful to bring us to the knowledge of God, and of his perfections; as if that were the meaning of what the Apostle asserts *Rom.* i. 20, *Acts* xvii. 27. and as if, because some of the works of God are palpable, and our senses can help us to feel them, therefore our senses may help us to know the incorporeal being of God, as if that were palpable likewise. But, as Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine of senses and imaginary ideas cannot stand before scripture-light, so neither can it agree with the mind of sound divines on that text, *Rom.* i. 19, 20. Dr. *John Evans*, the continuator of *Henry*, on it, says, "They [the Gentile world] had *some* even among them that "had the knowledge of God, were convinced of the existence "of one supreme *Numen*. The philosophy of *Pythagoras*, "*Plato*, and the *Stoicks* discovered a great deal of the know-"ledge of God. But whence had they these discoveries? *God* "*hath shewed it unto them.* Those common natural no-"tions they had of God, were imprinted upon their heart "by the God of nature himself, who is the *Father of lights.* "This sense of a Deity, and a regard to that Deity, is so con-"nate with the human nature, that some think we are to "distinguish men from brutes by these, rather than by rea-"son." And then he adds, "By what way and means these "discoveries and notices they had, were *confirmed and im-*"*proved, viz.* by the works of creation, *verse* 20." *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* To this purpose others have also supposed, that these two verses contain a twofold natural knowledge of God, and both owing to the God of nature; the one *connate*, imprinted on the hearts and minds of all; the other *acquired*, through the rational contemplation of the creatures, which shew forth the glory of God's power, *&c.* and that the former of these is confirmed and improved by the latter. This distinction seems to be allowed in our *Confession*, chap. 1. § 1. where both the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, are spoke of as the helps and grounds of the natural knowledge of God. But did ever any divine till now say, that God was to be known by the help of our senses and imaginations? It is true, the bodily

sentiam ignis, quamvis ipsam hujus ignis essentiam nec sensus nec intellectus perceperit. Planè eodem modo quamvis *essentiam* seu *quidditatem* Dei intellectus noster non percipiat, eo quòd nunquam fuerit in sensibus; attamen *existentia* seu *quodditas* Dei ex creaturis per sensus omnino colligitur, & à sensibus ab intellectu percipitur, eo quòd effectus infallibiliter arguat existentiam suæ causæ secundæ juxtà & primæ.

bodily eyes see the visible things of God; and so, by occasion thereof, natural reason and understanding may help. But can the bodily eyes help to see the invisible things of God? Indeed these *are clearly seen*, says the text. But how? *Being UNDERSTOOD*, says the same text, *By the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* These things our senses and imaginations can give us no help to see; but the rational mind that God has given us, when he helps it to reason and argue, can help us to see and acknowledge these invisible things. *Hæc agnoscit mens* [says *Marlorat* on the text] *intuens opificium Dei; nam ex multis vestigiis ratiocinatur ista de Deo.* It is the common sentiment of orthodox divines, that there is a twofold natural knowledge of God, (as *Mastricht* asserts, *Gangr. p.* 202.) not only that which arises from the contemplation of the creatures in a discursive way, reasoning from the effect to the cause, &c. which they call *acquired* knowledge, of which only some think, *Rom.* i. 19. 20. is to be understood; but also that knowledge of God which is (as it were) concreated with us, and *connate*, which the Apostle asserts *Rom.* ii. 14. On this subject *Charnock* speaks at large; whom I have occasion to cite afterward, *viz.* § 14. of this chapter.

The words of a notable Papist on that text, the eminent *Pascal, Thoughts, p.* 166. are remarkable. "The holy scripture informs us indeed, that the beauty of the creatures leads to the knowledge of the Creator; but it doth by no means assure us, that the creatures produce this effect indifferently in all persons. On the contrary, it declares, that, whenever they appear thus convincing, it is not by their own force, but by means of that light which God diffuseth into the heart of those to whom he is pleased to discover himself by their means, *Rom.* i. 19. *Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.* It teaches in general, that our God is a God that hides himself; and that, since the corruption of human nature, he hath left men under such a blindness as they can only be delivered from by Jesus Christ; without whom we are cut off from all communication with the Deity, *Matth.* xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him*, &c." Afterward he says, "That it is by Jesus Christ alone that we can pretend to know God in such a manner as shall be savingly advantageous unto us. Jesus Christ is not only God, but he is God under this character, the healer and repairer of our miseries. He alone is the true

" God to us men; that is, to miserable and sinful creatures. He " is our chief centre and supreme object, in respect of all that " we can wish, and all that we can understand. Whoever " knows not him, knows nothing, either in the order of the " world, or in his own nature and condition; for as we know " God only by Jesus Christ, so it is by him alone that we " know ourselves." From the words of the judicious *Pascal*, two things are clear. *First*, That the knowledge of God's being from the creatures shewing that he is, is by no means owing to our sense or imagination, as our helps and assistants, as if the creatures themselves produced this effect whenever seen; but that it is owing to the light God diffuseth into the heart of those to whom he is pleased to discover himself by their means, according to *Rom.* i. 19. *Because that which may be known of God*, or is knowable by the light of nature, *is manifest in them*, or to them, as in the margin, *Acts* xiv. 17. *For God hath shewed it unto them*, namely, by that light of nature, and the rational consideration of the creature, as in *vers.* 20. Our sense and sight of the creature is not the help; it is only the occasion; but it is God's light making known what is knowable of himself by the creature, and shewing it to us, that is the help to the knowledge of God *that* he is, and that he is wise and powerful, *&c.* *Secondly*, That by nature's light we cannot know *what* God is, or *what* these perfections are; *what* a Three-one God he is, and *what* he is *to us*. Natural reason here fails. It is by Christ only, and by faith in him, that we know God to any real advantage; he alone being the true God to us men, sinful men. It is not by the help of our senses and imagination, nay nor by the help of natural reason itself, that we come to this knowledge of God in Christ, but only by the eye of faith; which is the *evidence of things not seen*, and by which we see that Christ is not only God, but God the Saviour, the true God, and the true Saviour, the true Christ, God in our nature. Without knowing him by faith we know nothing as we ought to know; nothing of God, nor of ourselves, nor the order of the world, for *by faith we understand*, *&c.* *Heb.* xi. 3. *By reason we rather think and opine*, [says Dr. *John Collings* †] *than understand, and certainly know.* By nature we know something of God darkly, by knowing the creatures; but by grace and by faith we know ourselves, and the creatures, by knowing God. Vast is the odds between seeing God in the light of the creature, and seeing

† On *Providence*, *p.* 27.

seeing the creature in the light of God. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen,* and the *seeing of him that is invisible*; and by faith we understand. To this purpose also are these words of Dr. *Owen* †: "The *vain mind* multiplies *vain* imagina-
" tions like the sand on the sea-shore. These are called the
" *figments* of the hearts of men, *Gen.* vi. 5. which are found
" to be only *evil continually*. These it feigns and frames,
" abundantly bringing them forth, as the earth doth grass,
" or as a cloud pours out drops of water.—— There was
" the same cogitative or imaginative faculty in us in the
" state of innocency, as there remains under the power of
" sin. But then, all the actings of it were *orderly* and re-
" gular.—— God was and would have been the principal
" object of them, and all other things in order unto him.
" But now being turned off from him, the mind in them
" engageth in all manner of *confusion*, and they all end in
" *vanity* and disappointment. Hence the mind cannot *as-*
" *sent* unto the common principles of religion in a due
" manner, which yet it cannot deny.—— Hereon, in con-
" version unto God, we are said to have *our minds renewed*,
" Rom. xii. 2. and to be *renewed in the spirit of our minds*.
" By the mind the faculty itself is intended, the rational
" principle in us of apprehension, of thinking, discoursing,
" and *assenting*, &c.—— The understanding, which guides
" the soul in the choice of the notions which it receives by
" the mind, is more corrupt than the mind itself; therefore
" it is said to be *darkened*, yea *darkness*. And, being so, it is
" wholly in vain to pretend to a sufficiency in it to *discern spi-*
" *ritual things*, without a supernatural illumination."

P. 60. 61. Mr. *Robe* accuses me of dishonest dealing, for alledging, as if he supposed, that our senses and imagination can bring us to the sufficient and saving knowledge of God. But, however he states the matter, I think he wrongs himself more than I did, by his own assertion here, *p.* 61. "That
" though we cannot have the saving knowledge of God with-
" out the inward and effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit,
" yet, without the help of our senses and imagination in an
" ordinary way, we cannot have that saving knowledge
" which is the effect of the Spirit's teaching." Here is strange help that the Spirit of God must have, and without which his teaching signifies nothing unto salvation, namely, the help of our natural senses and imagination. But what help these can give, I have already shewn, even no help at all, but hurt. If the Spirit cannot teach us savingly *without* this, then it

† On the *Spirit*, *p.* 211. 212.

it will follow, that *with* this help the Spirit can; and so our senses and imagination can at least contribute to our being brought to the saving knowledge of God. Thus he fixes the charge upon himself, and is the first divine I ever knew publish such unguarded divinity. But let us hear his reason, "Because, says he, all the knowledge of God, his nature and perfections that we have by the outward means of his works and word, which the Holy Ghost makes effectual, is attained by the *intervention* of our senses and imagination." Besides what I have said to this already, since hence he infers the senses and imagination are greatly helpful to bring us to the saving knowledge of God, I may here observe, that his argument proves too much; and therefore proves nothing at all, as logicians use to speak. Why? His argument is this: That *that* by the intervention whereof all the knowledge of God and his perfections is attained, is greatly helpful to the saving knowledge of him; but our senses and imagination are that by the intervention whereof all the knowledge of God is attained: *Therefore* our senses and imagination are greatly helpful to the saving knowledge of God and his perfections. This is evidently his argument. But I deny the *major*, or first proposition, as false; and therefore the conclusion will not hold, That that by the intervention whereof all the knowledge of God and his perfections is attained, is greatly helpful to the saving knowledge of him. That this, I say, is a false proposition, I prove thus: We have the knowledge of God and his perfections by the intervention of providence in many things, which yet are no ways helpful to the saving knowledge of him; and the use that God makes of these things, does not infer their helpfulness in themselves to this end. The argument here confounds occasions with helps; which yet ought to be kept distinct. It confounds occasions that God takes to himself for making himself known, with helps that he prescribes or gives to us for our knowing of him. The intervention of occasions that God takes *to himself*, may differ so much from interveening helps *for us*, that, instead of being helps, they may be hinderances in themselves to our knowledge of him, or communion with him. For example: The mountains of sin and guilt are the interveening occasions that God takes for making himself known unto his people under the character of a *roe* skipping on the mountains, and leaping on the hills, in kindness and love to their souls. Are mountains of sin and guilt therefore to be reckoned helps to the knowledge of Christ, because it is obtained by the intervention of these? Nay, in themselves are they not hinderances to the knowledge of God,

and

and communion with him? Thus also our natural senses and carnal imagination, (for no other sort have we since the fall of *Adam*), whatever occasion God may take from them to make them subservient sometimes to good purposes; yet, in themselves, they are not interveening helps to the knowledge of God, but rather hinderances and impediments. If I see a part of a flinty rock upon the road which I pass, this can be no way helpful to me in itself toward the knowledge of any spiritual thing; but the grace of God may make it an occasion of my thinking upon my own stony heart, and the necessity of the soft heart promised in the covenant of grace. Sense gazing on a flinty rock with the bodily eye, whatever occasion it may give to the faith of such as are spiritually minded; yet to suppose it can give help to the knowledge of a hard heart, which is invisible by bodily eyes, or any proper assistance to heavenly thoughts, is as absurd as the fool's act in the comedy, that, looking with his eyes, and pointing with his finger *to the earth*, cried out, *O Cœlum! Oh Heavens!* But of this argument more will occur afterwards.

Mr. *Robe* seems to confirm what he last said by the following words: "The works of God and the sacraments manifest him to us by the eye, as does also the word read by "us, and the word preached, or otherways taught, by the "ear. And now [says he] Mr. *Erskine* hath what I assert at "large. He may try his hand with them when he pleases." Here indeed Mr. *Robe* brings himself as near to orthodoxy as he can; and, as I have expressed myself sometimes to that purpose, as he does here, so I would be loth to dispute against him in this way of speaking, were it not that he brings it in to corroborate and establish his doctrine of imaginary ideas, making our senses and imagination proper helps and assistants to the saving knowledge of God, &c. For thus he explains this doctrine, *p.* 10. "All the knowledge we acquire of God and spiritual things by outward means, is "conveyed to us by seeing and hearing. The sensible signs, "whether the works or word of God, leave their species or "image upon the imagination; which is ever afterwards "helpful to the other faculties, by presenting the images of "these signs unto them." Why then, Mr. *Robe*'s meaning is, All the knowledge of God we have by hearing his word read or preached, and by seeing his works, and the sensible signs in the sacraments, is attained by the intervention of our senses and imagination; which are helpful to that saving knowledge of God and his perfections, by presenting the images of these signs unto them; these sensible signs, whether the works

works or word of God, having left their ſpecies or image upon the imagination. This indeed is the doctrine that I oppoſe, as not the doctrine of faith, but of fancy. And I would expreſs myſelf in oppoſition to it in the notable words we have, *Morning Exerciſes, vol.* V. *p.* 231. ſpeaking againſt Popiſh imagery and idolatry, relating to the ſacramental ſuppet of our Lord. The words are: " Faith herein reſpects the " peculiar way of the communication and exhibition of Chriſt " unto us by ſymbols or ſenſible outward ſigns of bread and " wine. It finds the divine wiſdom and ſovereignty of " Chriſt in the choice of them, having no other foundation " in reaſon, or the light of nature. And the repreſentation " that is made herein of him, with the benefits of his death " and oblation, is ſuited unto faith only, without any aid " of ſenſe and imagination; for although the ſymbols are vi- " ſible, yet their relation unto the thing ſignified is not diſ- " cernible unto any *ſenſe* or *reaſon*. Had he choſen for this " end an image or a crucifix, or any ſuch actions as did, by " a kind of natural and ſenſible reſemblance, ſhew forth his " paſſion, and what he did and ſuffered, there had been no " need of faith in this matter." Thus, as what is viſible in the ſacrament, and to be ſeen by ſenſible ſigns, is ſuited unto faith only, without any aid of ſenſe and imagination, otherways, if all were the object of the ſenſe of ſeeing, there would be no need of faith; ſo I may ſay the ſame about hearing the word, or the reading of it: As theſe are mere natural acts of the ear and eye, or of the bodily ſenſes as ſuch, they belong not at all to religion, no more than the hearing of ſounds and voices, or the viewing of words and letters: And in this reſpect indeed they may be helpful to form the image of ſounds and letters upon the mind. But; when it is ſaid, *that faith cometh by hearing*, it muſt be ſome other ſort of hearing than this: For it is immediately added, *and hearing by the word of God*; intimating, that faith comes not immediately or properly by the hearing of ſounds with the bodily ear, for ſo beaſts hear as well as men, and are ſtartled, if it be a thundering voice, or a loud ſound, impreſſing them, according as it ſtrikes their imagination; but God works upon men as rational creatures, and ſays to them, as *Pſal.* xxxii. 9. *Be not ye as the horſe or the mule, which have no underſtanding.* And therefore faith comes firſt and more immediately by a rational hearing, attending unto the word of God, or the truths heard. The bodily ear, as it belongs ſimply to the animal life, may hear ſounds and voices; but t cannot hear the word of God, nor any truth of God, no more

more than the ear of a beast, separate from the rational nature, which God works upon by his word of truth: Which truth is the object of faith, and cannot be the object of sense, or an imaginary idea; for truth (as I said) hath no bodily shape, nor audible voice; none can form an image of it in his mind by imagination. Therefore it is not *hearing* in Mr. *Robe*'s sense that faith cometh by. Images and imaginary ideas may come by his way of hearing; but the knowledge of God, and of truth, and of things invisible, cometh by the hearing of faith. 'Tis not fancy, but faith comes by right hearing. There is no hearing where there is no rational hearing. Blind ignorance, however devout, cannot please God. Hearing, if it be not rational, or if without knowledge, is neither the mean of faith, nor acceptable to God: *Bonum enim non est, quod non est rationabiliter bonum.* Tertul. adverse. Marc. lib. 1. This is cited by *Davenant in Col.* i. 9. as a wise saying, *viz. Nothing is good that is not reasonably so.* From rational creatures God requires *reasonable service.*

SECT. XII.

PAGE 61. "Before I leave this subject, [says Mr. *Robe*,] "according to the most feasible way of dealing with my "sort of adversaries, I shall shew my divinity is that of o-"ther sound divines, as theirs is not." Mr. *Robe* might have suspended his boasting of authorities as wholly upon his side, till matters were tried. He cites here *Burgess* and *Manton.* First, "*Burgess*, on *original sin, p.* 351. says, *The imagina-*"*tive power or phantasy in a man is immediately subservi-*"*ent to the understanding in its operations*; and, p. 353. *hath* "*some dependence upon it.*" Though I have not this book of *Burgess* by me at present, to try if he has done him justice; yet, taking it for granted that the quotation is fair, what can Mr. *Robe* thence infer? Is it, that the imagination and fancy is greatly helpful to bring us to the saving knowledge of God? Yea, but this will by no means follow. For,

1. Mr. *Robe* speaks as if he were on a subject of divinity, explaining some moral help, mean or duty requisite to the saving knowledge of God: But Mr. *Burgess*, in that expression, seems to be upon a quite other subject, namely, a point of philosophy, not respecting the moral law, nor God's moral government of the world of mankind; but respecting the natural law of God towards creatures as creatures, or men as men; not as Christians, or subjects of his moral government,

but simply as creatures, sustained by him as the God of nature and providence. Hence Mr. *Burgess* speaks only of the natural subserviency and dependence of one natural faculty upon another; which none can deny: But Mr. *Robe* confounds these together, by saying, that our senses and imaginations are greatly helpful to bring us to the saving knowledge of God. Which absurd way of speaking it is impossible for him to exemplify from any divine that ever wrote. For,

2. Things may be subservient to, and dependent upon one another by the law of nature, that God has made to the creature, and the law of providence, that God has made for himself in sustaining the animal world; and yet not properly helpful to one another, far less to spiritual purposes. God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, can make things that are opposite and destructive to one another, to be subservient to each other. For example, the fall of the first *Adam* was made subservient to the revelation of the second; and so to the knowledge of God in Christ: Yet who will say that *Adam*'s sin was helpful to this effect? *Cæsar*'s decree *that all the world should be taxed*, was subservient to Christ's being born at *Bethlehem*, *Luke* ii. 1. yet was *Cæsar*'s decree properly helpful thereto? The sin of crucifying the Lord of glory was subservient to the great blessing of our redemption by the blood of Christ; was that sin therefore properly helpful to it? The sins and falls of the saints are made subservient to their repentance, remission and recovery through Jesus Christ; is their sin therefore greatly helpful to that end? It will not follow then, that, because some things are subservient to bring about much good, therefore they are helpful to it: For in themselves we see, by these and such like instances, they may be hurtful and directly opposite to that good, instead of being helpful thereto.

3. Some things may be helpful *occasionally* in providence, that yet are no way helpful *properly* in themselves. Innumerable are the objects of sense, the fancy and imagination whereof may be subservient to the understanding in its operation; even all the creatures of God in the material world; wherein the enlightened understanding may see many footsteps of divine wisdom, power, and other attributes: And the understanding may have some dependence thereon, as occasions of its operation, but not as helps; because corporeal things can give no help properly to the understanding of incorporeal and invisible things. For,

4. Natural powers of body and soul that have different objects

jects and different operations, however subservient unto, or dependent on each other, yet cannot at all be properly helpful in their operations, that are peculiar to them severally. This I will illustrate by some examples. Eyes and hands are very subservient to, and dependent on each other in reading and writing, when the soul employs them both for that purpose; and yet they cannot be helpful to one another in their peculiar and distinct operations. A man's hands cannot help him to see, nor can his eyes handle the pen; and, since he can neither see with his hands, nor write with his eyes, they cannot be helpful to each other in their distinct operations. Thus the eye fixed upon the preacher may be subservient to a composed hearing of a sermon; yet the sense of *seeing* cannot in itself be helping to the sense of *hearing*, nor the sense of *hearing* to the sense of *seeing*; no more than a man can *see* with his *ears*, or *hear* with his *eyes*. Their objects and operations are both distinct in themselves; things visible being the object of sight, and things audible the object of hearing. The operation of these senses, however dependent on, or subservient to each other, yet they are so distinct, and independent upon one another in their proper operations, that they cannot be properly helpful therein. No more can the sensitive power be helpful properly to the intellectual, however subservient to each other they may be; yea, when their operations are confounded, they are hurtful, instead of being mutually helpful. As when a man is very intent in looking upon an object, it may hinder his hearing or noticing what is said; or when very intent upon what he hears, it may hinder his seeing or noticing what he sees: Even so, if the sensitive and imaginative faculties should present their images of corporeal objects to the understanding, or intellective faculty, and press them in upon it as proper helps to it, instead of being helpful, they would be hurtful, and tend to blind, and obscure, and darken, and abuse the understanding. Corporeal things may give occasion of exercise sometimes, but no help to the understanding; whereof both the objects and operation is spiritual and intellectual.

Yea distinct powers and faculties that in some respect may be helpful to each other, yet, when going out of their proper place, may be exceeding hurtful. The head may be helpful to the feet, as the Apostle speaks, 1 *Cor.* xii. 18. 21. of one member of the body standing in need of another, though the one cannot do what the other does. The feet cannot help the head, in its *governing* operation: Nor a man's head his feet, in their proper work; for he cannot walk nor stand up-

on his head, and his attempting to do so, may be very hurtful. And so is the doctrine that sets any distinct natural powers out of their own sphere, and makes sense and imagination greatly helpful to bring us to the saving knowledge of God, because of some subserviency thereof to the understanding.

I might here observe, that the air we breathe in, is subservient to the life of the body, hence also to the support of the corporeal faculty of sense and fancy, which Mr. *Robe* makes so greatly helpful to bring us to the saving knowledge of God; why then, the air we breathe in, is at least immediately subservient, or a remote help to the saving knowledge of God. And at this rate our daily eating and drinking, and sleeping, to support the bodily frame with its sensitive faculties, or any thing subservient to sustain the frame of nature, may be brought in as greatly helpful to the saving knowledge of God. Thus Mr. *Robe*'s scheme of logicks and divinity mixed together, lands him in the mire of strange absurdities; like those who bring themselves into the labyrinth Sir *Richard Blackmore* speaks of:

They still are more and more perplex'd, the fate
Of metaphysick jugglers in debate.

Here naturals and morals are confounded, physicks and ethicks blended together. One would think, as I said, Mr. *Robe* were speaking of moral helps to bring us, as ignorant sinners, to the saving knowledge of God as the God of grace; and yet, when they are examined, what he speaks of, are only natural attendants on us, as men supported by the God of nature and providence: For here the parts and supports of human nature, and the means of saving grace, are miserably mixed together in a confused chaos, a new imaginary world, made by the fortuitous concourse of innumerable imaginary atoms. Nay rather I should say, this falls out by the righteous judgment of God, leaving men to strong delusions who inclined not to receive the truth in love.

But, if *Burgess*'s authority fails Mr. *Robe*, he next applies himself to *Manton*, vol. III. *p.* 32. whose words, as cited by Mr. *Robe*, *p.* 61. are, "God hath given us a body bored "through with five senses, to let out thoughts, and to take "in objects; to *taste* the goodness of God in the creatures, "and *see* divinity in them, and *hear* the voice by which they "proclaim the glory of God. *Pag.* 53. Meditation upon the "creatures is a work that is of great profit, partly to heighten fancy, and make it fit for meditation. O practise upon the creation, and you will find fancy to be much elevated

" vated and raised! *Pag.* 256. Man's reason is lower than " that of angels, because it needs the ministry of *fancy* and " *imagination*. *Fancy* needs *outward sense*, which an angel " needs not." Now, as to this passage,

1. It makes as much for Mr. *Robe*'s purpose as the former, and no more; for certainly he cites it as exactly agreeable to the former. *Manton*, no doubt, understands the bodily senses here as subservient for spiritual uses to believers, through the blessing of God, and the operation of his Spirit. He speaks of objects of sense taken in spiritually; not in carnal images of outward things, but by spiritual thought and meditation upon the most spiritual things: For the *goodness* of God cannot be *eaten* carnally with the mouth; but the natural eating may occasion spiritual and believing views of it. *Divinity* in the creature cannot be *seen* with the bodily eye; but the sight of the creatures of God may occasion spiritual and believing views of God therein. The *voice* by which the creature proclaims the glory of God, cannot be *heard* by the outward ear; but outward hearing may occasion (through grace) the spiritual and believing consideration of what God speaks by them. *Divinity*, which *Manton* speaks of in this metaphorical way, being a spiritual object, can neither be tasted, seen or heard with bodily senses; yea Mr. *Robe* will own it cannot be the object of an imaginary idea: How then can mental images of tasting of meats, seeing of bodies, hearing of voices, be helpful to the understanding of *divinity* in the creature? These images may indeed be occasions to a rational soul, and especially to a spiritually-minded man, to think of God, and to meditate spiritually; but that they can be called properly *helps*, I deny. If any should call these innumerable occasions given us from the visible heavens above, or the earth below, by the name of *helps* and *teachers*, to bring us to the knowledge of God, it is not properly, but figuratively and metaphorically spoken: For, if they were properly natural helps in themselves, then every man would naturally see divinity in every creature which he looks at. But as the bodily eye sees nothing but corporeal things, and the natural imagination forms no other than corporeal images; so, when these come in to be proper teachers and helps to the understanding, can they give any spiritual understanding of spiritual things? Or rather will they not natively teach lessons of imagery and idolatry, instead of bringing to the true and saving knowledge of God? They are *teachers of lies*, and their lessons *the doctrine of vanity*.

2. This passage seems to be quoted by Mr. *Robe* in support of

of his doctrine of fancy, as a help to faith. But, if by *fancy* Mr. *Robe* mean the imaginary idea of things corporeal, or the images thereof, then I think the higher it is raiſed and elevated, it is ſtill the worſe. Meditation upon the creature or the works of God I underſtand, as an exerciſe that may be moſt ſpiritual; yea it is ſuch a neceſſary exerciſe, that *wo* is denounced againſt *them who regard not the work of the Lord, and conſider not the operation of his hands*, Iſa. v. 12. Pſal. xxviii. 5. This is an exerciſe of the intellectual faculty, and of underſtanding and judgment. But as for fancy and imagination, they are no part of ſpiritual exerciſe, but of *bodily*; which *profits little*. Yet it is true what *Manton* ſays, *Reaſon needs the miniſtry of fancy and imagination; and fancy needs outward ſenſe*; if the miniſtry of ſenſe and fancy unto reaſon be underſtood of ſuch a ſubſerviency, as to miniſter occaſions to it: For forms and repreſentations in the fancy, as all figures and metaphors from corporeal things, yield innumerable occaſions naturally unto reaſon and underſtanding, but no help in a proper ſenſe; for, whenever they come to help the underſtanding, they hurt it, and blind it with images; and, on that account, are to be expelled, as enemies: Therefore, ſays *Anthony Burgeſs*, according as Mr. *Robe* himſelf cites him, *letter* 2. *p.* 9. *It is the duty of the underſtanding to expel them.* Whereas, if they were proper helps, or greatly helpful, or abſolutely neceſſary in themſelves to the ſaving knowledge of God, they ought to be received, embraced and entertained. But a man needs never put away the occaſions of ſpiritual contemplations, taken from outward repreſentations: He can never look too much through created things to their increated author and original. But this he can never do by the help and aſſiſtance of his ſenſes and imagination, but by the help of reaſon, and eſpecially of ſanctified reaſon, and ſaving faith, making ſpiritual improvement of temporal and viſible things; which may help his natural fancy to form images, but cannot help his ſpiritual underſtanding to form any views of its ſpiritual objects.

If by fancy *Manton* underſtand the ſame thing that Mr. *Robe* does by our ſenſe and imagination, the object whereof is only things corporeal, then let fancy be elevated never ſo high, it cannot riſe above its own ſphere to ſpiritual things. Yet ſuch is our natural conſtitution, and, by our fall, reaſon is ſo much ſunk into ſenſe, that we are become like brute beaſts, and can ſcarce act rationally, unleſs occaſions be given to our underſtanding by ſenſation, or by the repreſentation of outward objects. And natural ſenſation gives occaſion

sion to rational reflexion, where there is a rational soul, or where sense and reason are naturally joined: But that sensation can give no help properly by itself to *this* reflexion; otherwise natural sensation in brute beasts might contribute to make them rational, because their sense and imagination might be greatly helpful to it. Also, the rational soul separate from the body would, one might think, cease to be rational, because destitute of these senses and imaginations that are said to be so greatly helpful and absolutely necessary in the united state of soul and body. Yea, at this rate, if a man was in such circumstances, whereof there hath been other instances, like that of *Paul*, when his soul was quite out of his body, *for what he knew*, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. then that soul of his behoved to be deprived of reason, or the exercise of it, while deprived of these bodily senses, that are supposed to be so greatly helpful and absolutely necessary. But how absurd these things are, is obvious. Therefore I say, our senses and imagination can give no help properly to bring us to reason or spiritual understanding; though they may give innumerable occasions to the rational soul to deduce spiritual conclusions from visible and imaginable things. If sense and imagination come in to help any other way, they come, like the devil, to tempt, instead of coming to help: For they can give no help but such as is suited to their nature; that is, to help the understanding to conceive of incorporeal things in a corporeal way, or under corporeal forms, figures and images; which is the greatest hurt, instead of help; and just such help as carnal sense and mere natural reason would give to faith; that is, to conceive of spiritual things in a carnal and natural way; comparing spiritual things only with natural, as man's wisdom teaches, and *not spiritual things with spiritual, as the Holy Ghost teaches*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. If imaginary ideas, by the means of our senses and imaginations, do naturally attend our meditations of God and of divine things, they never attend as helps to further, but as devils to mar our spiritual meditations. I might appeal to all that ever knew the plague of their own hearts, if they do not know to their sad experience, how many thousand vain imaginations, relating to God or Christ or heaven, will pass through their minds, from morning to evening; and yet never one of these vain and vile imaginary ideas contribute in the least to bring in, or help to one spiritual thought; but rather stand up like mountains, in the way of all spiritual contemplations, even when these are attempted. Whenever a person mints at being spiritual, these corporeal images and ima-

imaginations, whether he will or not, force him to be carnal, till the mighty power of God caſt down theſe ſtrong holds of Satan, 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5. Something of ſenſe indeed, as *Charnock* ſays, will interpoſe itſelf in our pureſt conception of ſpiritual things; but then, this interpoſition of ſenſe in theſe pure conceptions, inſtead of being helpful, is as hurtful to it, as nature is to grace, and fancy to faith. Hence the

Third authority Mr. *Robe* produces will be found as little to his purpoſe as the former, *p.* 62. "See alſo [ſays he] the "former paſſage from *Charnock*." And ſo he refers, I ſuppoſe, to *page* 8. and 9. where in *p.* 8. beſides the words of *Charnock* I juſt now mentioned, it is added, "The faculties which ſerve for contemplation, are either corporeal, "as the ſenſe and fancy, or ſo allied to them, that nothing "paſſes into them but by the organs of the body; [namely] "while we are in the body, and ſurrounded with fleſhly matter." Now, what can Mr. *Robe* hence infer for his purpoſe? Is it, that our ſenſes and imaginations are greatly helpful to the underſtanding, for bringing us to the ſaving knowledge of God? One may as well infer, if a perſon be ſhut up in a priſon that hath ſome grate through which he can ſee objects that are without in the fields, that therefore theſe grates are greatly helpful to his eye, to make him ſee the fields. The window is a paſſage for the ſight to get without the boundaries of the priſon; but to ſay it is a proper help to the ſight, is very abſurd. Even ſo the rational ſoul is, as it were, incloſed within a priſon of fleſh while here: What though the bodily ſenſes or bodily organs be like windows of the dark priſon, by which light gets in, and ſight gets out; are therefore theſe fleſhly windows greatly helpful to the ſpiritual eye of the ſoul, or to its ſpiritual ſight of the ſpiritual objects that are without? Why, in this ſenſe, no doubt, they are helpful, as they are paſſages and occaſions to get out of priſon: But to ſay that they are properly helpful to the ſeeing faculty of the ſoul, is as abſurd, as to ſay, that, becauſe the window of the priſon makes way for ſeeing without, therefore it is a great help to the ſight of the eye. Which is very abſurd: For it is a confounding the proper help of ſight, with that which is only the providential occaſion and opportunity given to ſee. A man's paſſing by me, may give me an occaſion to ſee him; but it would be very improper language to ſay, that it was a great help to my ſight of him. Perhaps, if he had come much nearer or cloſer to me, his body might have blinded my eye: Whereas proper helps to

ſeeing

seeing, the nearer they are, the more serviceable. Even so outward objects presented by sense or fancy to the understanding, may give occasion to spiritual improvements; but they are so far from being proper helps, that the nearer they are brought to the intellectual faculty, the more is it blinded and darkened with corporeal shadows and images, instead of spiritual objects suiting its nature. However, this is all the proof Mr. *Robe* hath for his point from this passage.

Another passage of *Charnock*'s that he cites, *p.* 9. is this: "Whatsoever we think or speak of God, is handed first to "us by the notice we have of some perfection in the crea- "ture; and explains to us some particular excellency of God, "rather than the fulness of his essence.—God in his word is "pleased to step below his own excellency, and point us to "those excellencies in his works, whereby we may ascend "to the knowledge of those excellencies which are in his na- "ture. —— We cannot possibly think or speak of God, un- "less we transfer the names of created perfections to him; "yet we are to conceive of them in a higher manner "when we apply them to the divine nature, than when we "consider them in the several creatures formally, exceeding "those perfections and excellencies which are in the crea- "ture, and in a more excellent manner: As one saith, Though "we cannot comprehend God without the help of such re- "semblances, *yet we may, without making an image of "him*; [this Mr. *Robe* marks with a different character, as "answering much to his purpose]: So that inability of "ours excuseth those apprehensions of him from any way "offending against his divine nature." These words of *Charnock*'s I easily agree with: But Mr. *Robe*'s view of them may be gathered from what he instantly subjoins, *p.* 10. "All "the knowledge [says he] we acquire of God and spiritual "things by outward means, is conveyed to us by seeing or "hearing. The sensible signs, whether the works or word "of God, leave their species or image upon the imaginati- "on; which is ever afterwards helpful to the other faculties, "by presenting the images of these signs unto them:" He means to the understanding, or superior intellectual faculties of the soul. Here then Mr. *Robe* and the author whom he cites, seem to differ exceedingly. Mr. *Charnock* speaks of such helps of outward resemblances as human understanding can take occasion to improve toward the knowledge of God and spiritual things, without making any image of him or them; and so without offending against his divine nature. But Mr. *Robe* will have images brought in upon the under-

ſtanding, if poſſible, by explaining, in his way, how our ſenſes and imagination are helpful to the underſtanding, namely, by preſenting images to it; and ſo would ſeem to demonſtrate, if he agree with *Charnock* and himſelf, both that the way how our ſenſes and imagination are helpful to apprehend God, without making an image of him, is by preſenting ſome image of him to the underſtanding; and that the way how the imagination is helpful and ſerviceable to the knowledge of ſpiritual and inviſible things, is by preſenting to the underſtanding the ſpecies or images of corporeal and viſible things, left upon the imagination by ſenſible ſigns, whether in God's word or works. Thus the cure and help of mental imagery would be by preſenting images to the underſtanding; where the cure ſeems to be as ill as the diſeaſe. I doubt not but, if *Charnock* were alive, he would be aſhamed of ſuch a way of adopting his expreſſions. *God ſerves himſelf,* ſays *Charnock,* [cited by Mr. *Robe* elſewhere,] *of theſe things that are moſt expoſed to our ſenſes, moſt obvious to our underſtanding, to give us ſome acquaintance with his own nature, and of theſe things which otherwiſe we were not capable of having any notion of.* This I willingly ſubſcribe to; becauſe here no proper helpfulneſs to our underſtanding is aſcribed (as Mr. *Robe* does) to our ſenſes and imagination, but only the providential ſubſerviency, by God's ſerving himſelf of them, and making them occaſions of giving us ſome acquaintance with him: Whereas, when they are made proper helps by preſenting their picture and image, they are ſuch helps as it is not lawful for the underſtanding to receive, but muſt inſtantly reject with abhorrence, and expel.

The only real help then that outward ſenſe can be ſuppoſed to give to the underſtanding, is not by ſenſe itſelf; but is merely occaſional and providential. The help that Mr. *Robe* thinks it gives, is not real, but imaginary and fanciful, tending to blind the underſtanding through ſhadows, forms, figures, pictures and images of corporeal things. The underſtanding may take occaſion, as the learned *De Vries* ſays, ſometimes from material things to deduce views of what is immaterial; from carnal things it may ſometimes take occaſion to deduce thoughts of ſpiritual things: Whatever good uſe the underſtanding makes of theſe things, flows not from any help they give by their images in the mind, but from providence affording matter and occaſion of thought. This is all the help that our ſenſes, imagination and fancy give as they are *natural*; namely, materials and occaſions of thought to the rational ſoul to improve upon: But no proper help can

they

they give for that purpose. Again, if they be considered as *carnal*, and thus they are in all mankind since the fall, they give merely matter and occasion of vain thoughts, by obtruding on the understanding nothing but images; which, instead of giving help to it, are so hurtful, that the understanding can act to no purpose till it banish all such forms, figures, and images that the fancy presents; for the understanding cannot act like itself, till it remove the objects of sense and fancy, and the images of corporeal things, and betake itself to spiritual objects, suited to its intellectual nature. Natural *sense* and imagination is only helpful to apprehend corporeal objects and visible creatures. Natural *reason* is the only help to the natural understanding of God and spiritual things by the creatures; and *faith* of God's operation is the only help to the spiritual understanding of things divine and supernatural, exhibite in the word of God. Natural reason, assisted and enlightened by the objective revelation of the scripture, may have a very great reach toward the speculative and notional knowledge of spiritual things; but saving faith only is the help to saving and sanctifying knowledge: *By faith we understand*, Heb. xi. 3. Though, in one sense, by knowledge and understanding we believe; yet, in another, by faith we know and understand.

But, not to deviate from the present purpose, what I have said, tends, I think, to discover the weakness and insufficiency of Mr. *Robe*'s alledged authorities upon his side. However, he boasts greatly of them, saying, "From all this it is now "evident, [*p.* 62.], that our senses and imagination are not "only helpful to us, to think upon the nature and perfecti-"ons of God, but, while we are in the body, absolutely ne-"cessary to our attaining to the knowledge of God; and "that Mr. *Fisher*'s and Mr. *Erskine*'s contrary assertion is al-"so contrary both to scripture and reason." Here one would think very deep divinity is spoken, with a very great solemnity; and what does it come to? Even that a body with the five senses, and a faculty of imagination, is not only helpful to us to think upon the nature and perfections of God, but absolutely necessary to our attaining to the saving knowledge of God, as elsewhere; and that they are thus helpful, even *as they are natural powers and faculties*; for so he says towards the foot of this same page. So that these natural senses and fancies, even as such, have this great honour of being absolutely necessary helps to saving knowledge ascribed to them. If matters be so, what a pity is it, that, since he speaks of scripture, no *scripture* is yet produced for this doctrine,

ſtrine, but ſuch as proves it to be unſcriptural? and that, ſince *reaſon* is ſpoken of, no *reaſon* hath been given for it, but what declares it to be unreaſonable? Yea, if this doctrine of Mr. *Robe*'s were ſcriptural, rational and true, what a pity is it, that no ſtandard of doctrine, no confeſſion of faith in the Chriſtian world, did ever to this day make mention of ſuch an abſolutely neceſſary help to the ſaving knowledge of God; and that no divine that wrote upon divinity, ever made any mention of it in Mr. *Robe*'s way of expreſſing it till now? while yet the thing is ſo eaſy and natural, that no man or woman ever was or will be in the world, without being furniſhed with theſe abſolutely neceſſary helps to ſaving faith and ſaving knowledge, namely, natural ſenſe and natural imagination. Here is natural divinity indeed, and carnal doctrine exhibiting very carnal helps. Mr. *Robe* ſeems, but needs not be offended at the name *carnal*, when ſome of God's own ordinances are called by God himſelf, *carnal ordinances*, Heb. ix. 10. He ſpeaks of theſe natural ſenſes and imaginations, as if they were divine ordinances, and divine helps to the ſaving knowledge of God. And, though they be indeed divine gifts, from the God of nature, and might be called, on that account, divine ordinances too, yet they are ſuch *carnal ordinances* and *carnal helps*, and ſuch unſucceſsful ones, that theſe carnal ſenſes and imaginations of men are the greateſt hinderances and impediments of thinking upon God and his perfections, and the ſtrongeſt bars and lets in the way of the ſaving knowledge of God; as is evident from the experience almoſt of all mankind, as well as from the ſcriptures of truth, declaring, that *the carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: That the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs to him: Neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned: That natural imaginations*, that is, *reaſonings*, 2 Cor. x. 5. in the higher, as well as *fancy*, in the lower faculties of the ſoul, *and every high thing in man exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God.*

But Mr. *Robe* may ſay, theſe faculties, as they are carnal and corrupt, are hinderances; but, as they are natural, they are neceſſary helps, as he elſewhere ſpeaks. It is true, the grace of God in regeneration does not deſtroy the natural faculties, they ſtill remain; yet it renews them, as much as if they did not remain, but were quite removed: *For old things are done away, and all things made new*; the old heart is taken away, and a new heart given; the old natural faculties are changed, and new ſpiritual faculties given, before

fore ever they be capable of giving any help toward the saving knowledge of God.

SECT. XIII.

MR. ROBE says, *p.* 62, 63. "The question is not, Whether "the imagination, and other faculties, as corrupt and unsanctified [in the Heathen], hindered from attaining all that "knowledge of God taught by the visible things of the creation, and abused what was attained; which is not controverted? but, Whether we are greatly helped by these powers, "*as natural powers and faculties*, to attain unto the knowledge of God, and such as without them we cannot? The "contrary to this is what Mr. *Erskine* should have proven, "seeing he so confidently asserts, That our senses and imaginations, (that is, these natural powers and faculties, for "it is of them, under this consideration, all along in this "controversy they are spoken of), instead of being greatly "helpful to us, do greatly hinder us, to think upon the nature and perfections of God. But this is what he hath not "done; and shall never be able to do, unless he can prove, "that the natural essential powers God hath given to us as men, "are not helpful to us; but we would know God much better if we wanted them: That is to say, a man would attain the knowledge of God's nature and perfections by the "visible things of the creation much better he were blind, "deaf, without feeling, and the other senses, and without "the faculty of imagination. This is the total amount of "that impertinent jumble of scriptures Mr. *Erskine* hath *p.* 55, "56, 57. I am afraid he won't get many, even Seceders, "that will chuse to put his conclusion to the trial." On these words I may remark,

1. One would think, that the speaker here was acting gravely like a divine, when he speaks of great helps to the knowledge of God and his perfections; and yet, before the sentence is at an end, one will hardly know whether he speaks in jest or in earnest. That he is in earnest in his bitter snarls against me, is evident: But, if he be in earnest in his argument, he is then making manifest his gross ignorance, both of philosophy and divinity, reason and religion. This I prove by remarking,

2. That he makes the five natural senses of the body, as they are natural senses and natural powers, to be greatly helpful to the knowledge of God in his divine nature and perfections. If so, then, wherever these senses are as natural powers, they must be natural helps to this end. But so it is, that, in horses, and dogs, and rats, and many other creatures,

creatures, these natural senses are given to them by the God of nature as natural powers; for they see other creatures and bodily things about them, they hear voices, and have all the rest of the bodily senses; which yet cannot in these creatures be helpful to the knowledge of God: Yet this behoved to be, if they were greatly helpful *as they are natural powers.*

3. Might it not have been expected that Mr. *Robe* would have said, that they were greatly helpful to the knowledge of God, as they are subservient to the rational faculties, or as they are blessed of God for that end? Which yet would not make good sense, if accurately considered; for, where he blesses, he spiritualises and metamorphoses them. But to say they are greatly helpful, as they are natural powers, to the attaining the knowledge of God and his nature and perfections, is to make a necessary connexion between the lowest corporeal actions of the animal life, and the highest spiritual attainments of the rational soul. For,

4. I remark, it is *reason*, and not *sense* that is the only help to attain the natural knowledge of God and his perfections. Why, but says Mr. *Robe*, without senses and imagination, or without eyes to see the visible things of the creation, or natural powers of sensation, we cannot possibly know God by the creature. Here again is a miserable confounding of a twofold knowledge; the knowledge of the *creature* by *sense*, and the knowledge of the *Creator* by *reason*; or the knowledge of corporeal things by our sensitive and imaginative powers, and the knowledge of incorporeal, invisible and spiritual things by our rational and intellectual powers. What though we cannot see or know the inhabitant of such a house, without going in by the door, or looking in at the window of the house; are therefore the doors and windows properly helps to my sight and knowledge of the inhabitants? Even so, what though natural sensation or bodily senses, which *Manton* compares to *holes bored through the body*, are like doors and windows, without passing of which the rational soul cannot see or apprehend these external objects, which gives occasion to reason and reflexion; is it therefore by the help of these doors and windows of sense that we reason and reflect? Doors and windows have no eyes to let us see and know those that are within the house: As little have the eyes and ears, and natural senses of the body any rational eyes or intellectual faculties to let us see and know the divine nature and perfections of God. Therefore, as they are natural powers merely sensitive and corporeal, they can be no ways helpful to our knowing

knowing of God, or things invisible. Yea, as doors and windows, by which we enter a house, are no ways helpful to our faculty of seeing and knowing those that are within the house; so, if we shall make use of these material doors and windows as helps to our sight, and set them before our eyes, instead of helping, they will greatly hinder and mar our seeing and knowing of the inhabitants; because we would but look at doors and windows, instead of looking in by them. Even so, if persons be taken up with the objects of sense and fancy, corporeal things and images, instead of helping, it will greatly hinder and obstruct the knowledge of God and spiritual things. I have ground therefore, from solid reason, and the nature of things, that differ as much as body and spirit, (whose natural powers and properties being naturally distinct, cannot interfere, so as to invade each others provinces, or leap over the boundaries that God and nature hath set to them severally,) to assert, That our senses and imaginations, as they are natural powers and faculties, instead of being helpful to us to think upon the nature and perfections of God, do greatly hinder us; because they can have no other but corporeal objects.

As in the point of spiritual knowledge it is said, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, notwithstanding all his natural powers, whether of sense or reason, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. because this saving knowledge of God is only by the help of saving faith and gospel-light: So, in the natural knowledge of God by the visible works of creation, it is not in nature, that our senses and imaginations viewing corporeal things, can give us any help properly to think upon God, or know his nature and perfections. God never gave us corporeal powers to help us to contemplate incorporeal and spiritual objects; but he hath given rational and intellectual powers for that end. Therefore I say again, that *reason* only, and not our senses and imaginations, is the help that God hath given, even to natural men, for that purpose; and thereby a capacity to reflect and think upon a supreme being, the author of all these visible works of creation. Yet every man that is come to the exercise of reason, hath not this much given him of God, as to employ his reason as he ought, in thinking upon God; for it is said of the generality of natural men, that *God is not in all their thoughts.* Though reason be given to them to help them to think upon God; yet they do not think upon him, till God himself help the reason he gave them, and some way shew himself to them, by enabling their rational powers to reflect upon the invisible author of

these

these visible works that they see, *Rom.* i. 19. *That which is known of God, is manifested in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.* So that sense and imagination, as they are natural powers (as Mr. *Robe* calls them) helping to know nothing but outward objects, are in themselves hinderances, instead of being properly helps to know God, and think upon him or spiritual objects. And *reason* is the only natural help to the natural knowledge of God by the creature; or rather God himself helping natural reason to this exercise, according to the forecited scripture. Thus I have proven, both from scripture and reason, what Mr. *Robe* said I had not done, and should never be able to do: And, whether he shall be able to give a reply or not, I take not upon me to determine; but am bold to say, he shall never be able to answer to God for such carnal doctrine and loose divinity.

To say, that our senses and imagination, or imaginary ideas, are greatly helpful or subservient to the knowledge of God, and to saving faith, because we cannot have the one without the other, is a fallacious imposition upon human understanding; as if one should say, that, because while we are in the body we cannot reason or argue without bodies, therefore our bodies are greatly helpful to our reasoning and arguing faculties: Whereas it is known, our dull earthly bodies are frequently very great impediments and hinderances to our rational and intellectual exercises. The body is helpful in its own place for bodily things; but not properly for spiritual. Our feet, for example, are greatly helpful to our walking upon the earth; but are not therefore greatly helpful to our walking upon the sea. If a man, by a miraculous power, were enabled, with *Peter*, to walk upon the water, surely he could not do so without feet; because, whatever element one may be said to walk upon, suppose fire, water, earth or air, while we are in the body, we cannot walk otherwise but with our feet: But will it follow therefore, that our feet are great helps to us to walk upon the water; because, properly speaking, we cannot walk at all without feet, but, go where we will while in the body, must take our feet along with us. Even so our bodily senses and imaginations attend our most spiritual actings; but they can no more help us to walk in these spiritual paths, or help us to saving knowledge and faith, than our feet can help us to walk on the face of the deep, on the head of a cloud, or the top of a rainbow. Bodies and spirits differ more yet, than the different elements. He that gave us our being, gave us different bodily powers, respecting different elements; he gave

us

us lungs to help us to breathe in the air, and feet to help us to walk upon the earth, and different powers for different purposes: And however subservient one may be to another in different respects, for example, a man cannot walk without breath, yet his lungs do not properly help his feet to walk on the earth, nor his feet help him to breathe in the air. And as little, yea far less can corporeal powers give any proper help to our intellectual faculties, however subservient in providence the one be to the other, while soul and body are unite. But, if one faculty make incroachment upon the proper power and prerogative of the other, then the faculty incroached upon, had as good want its help as have it. A man can walk upon the waves, as well without feet, as with them, unless by some miraculous and supernatural power he be helped to it. Thus spiritual powers are necessary for spiritual employments; to which corporeal powers can contribute no proper assistance.

5. Mr. *Robe* thinks I have this to prove, "That the natural "essential powers God hath given to us as men, are not "helpful to us, but we would know God much better if we "wanted them; that is, a man would attain the knowledge "of God's nature and perfection, by the visible things of "the creation, much better, he were blind, deaf, without "feeling, and other senses, and without the faculty of ima-"gination." To which the plain answer is, such as will be little to Mr. *Robe*'s purpose, (which is so much out of purpose,) namely, that, though we ought thankfully to acknowledge God for all our distinct natural powers that he hath bestowed upon us, even for eyes of flesh, whereby we see the visible creation, as well as for the eyes of reason, whereby we are capable to take occasion from visible things to look toward their invisible Author; yet should we dishonour the God of nature, by confounding the natural helps that he hath given for distinct purposes, and making them assume the place of each other, instead of keeping their own room that God hath assigned to them? How would we but mock God, if we should thank him for giving us eyes of flesh to help us to see and know spirits? Would we not dishonour the God that gave us rational souls and rational eyes, that are only fitted of God to give help for that purpose? Would we not mock him, if we should say, he gave us eyes to help us to hear, and ears to help us to see; the sense of smelling with the nose to help us to taste meat with our mouth; or the sense of tasting, to help us to handle? To the same purpose it would be to say, he gave us hands to help us to

walk with our feet, and feet to help us to work with our hands. To aſcribe that helpfulneſs to one ſenſe or member of the body which God, as the God of nature, hath aſſigned properly to another, is to diſhonour God, and invert the nature of things. Thus abſurd and immoral, as well as unphiloſophical is it to ſay, upon the matter, that God hath given us eyes of fleſh to help us to ſee, know, and think upon ſpirits, or corporeal organs as they are natural powers, to help us to ſee, know and think upon incorporeal and ſpiritual objects. This is a making the natural powers of the body, and that even as they are natural powers thereof, to invade the place and office of the natural powers of the ſoul, and ſo to put down reaſon from its throne, and ſet up ſenſe upon it, to the diſhonour of reaſon and religion both.

6. Whatſoever is a proper help or mean towards the knowledge of God and of his perfections, we may lawfully apply ourſelves to that help, and ſeek aſſiſtance thereby. If then our ſenſes and imaginations are ſuch great helps to the knowledge of God, as Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks, then we may have recourſe thereto, and ſo to our own natural powers, even theſe of our ſenſes and fancies, for help and aſſiſtance towards the knowledge of God. This hath ſuch an abominable aſpect, that it is like a going down to the uncircumciſed *Philiſtines* to ſharpen our tools, as if there were no ſmith in *Iſrael*; or into ourſelves and creatures for help, as if there were not a God in *Iſrael*, in whom alone is our help, even to the natural knowledge of him, *that* he is, and of his perfections, *that* they are, *Rom.* i. 19. much more to the ſaving knowledge of him, *what* he is in himſelf and unto us. In this knowledge our help is laid upon Chriſt, the glorious Redeemer, who came to give us this help, *John* i. 18. *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Matth. xi. 27. *No man knoweth the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*

7. Whereas Mr. *Robe* brings me in ſaying, upon the matter, "A man would attain the knowledge of God's nature and "perfections, by the viſible things of the creation, much better, he were blind, deaf, without feeling, and the other "ſenſes, and without the faculty of imagination." *Anſwer.* Mr. *Robe* ſeems to have learned this way of ſpeaking from *Epicurus*; in the view of whoſe philoſophy I meet with this expreſſion: *The eyes ſee in conjunction with the ſoul; for, if they were only doors for the ſoul to ſee through, (as ſome will have it,) we might ſee things better if our eyes were*

out.

out. But, upon what Mr. *Robe* here advances, I would remark, That though God's people were blind and deaf, and destitute of other bodily senses, and of the imaginative faculty of fancying and framing images of bodies; yet they would know God much better without these bodily organs, as it is with departed souls, than if they had them all, and yet wanted rational souls; as it is with brute beasts. And, since it is certain that bodies can subsist, as in brute beasts, with all these natural and corporeal powers, and yet these are no natural helps to reason or knowledge of divine things; and since a rational and immortal soul can subsist, as in a separate state, without any of these natural powers of corporeal organs, and yet have a better knowledge of God than now they have: Then it follows, that, whatever occasion is given by these corporeal faculties to the rational soul to think upon God, as represented in the creature, while soul and body are unite, this flows from the natural union and close connexion God hath made at present between soul and body, but not from any intrinsick necessity, or natural helpfulness of the body and its senses unto our attaining the knowledge of God; otherwise, wherever living bodies and bodily senses are, there would be that knowledge of God; and where there are no bodies, but only souls and spirits, there would be no knowledge of God: Which is most absurd. Besides, it is not the body that animates the soul, but the soul that animates the body in man. And though the rational soul may be said to hear, see, *&c.* by the body and its senses; yet *seeing* is no act of the rational soul properly, if it be not a rational seeing, nor *hearing* an act of it, if it be not a rational hearing. Therefore bodily eyes and ears, though they may be called *gifts of God,* as the God of nature and providence; yet they are no proper ordinances of God for helping us to the knowledge of him. When bodies are presented to the eye, and sounds are made in the ear, there is no man that hath eyes and ears, but will naturally see and hear them. But to confound this with the ordinances of reading or hearing the word, as they are rational actions and moral duties, is as absurd as the confounding of the fancy of sounds we hear, with the knowledge or faith of the truths we hear, tho' even rational hearing will not do without faith, *Heb.* iv. 2.

Mr. *Robe* says, " That what he had said above, is the to-
" tal amount of that impertinent jumble of scriptures Mr. *Er-*
" *skine* hath *p.* 55, 56, 57." *Answer.* Whether the scriptures there cited are jumbled impertinently, I leave to the

judgment of the judicious, who may see my words at the end of the preface to this treatise. Only I think it is evident, one of these scriptures does not contradict or cross another; but the whole of my opponent's explications above amounts indeed to an unaccountable jumbling of things together as opposite to one another as flesh and spirit, and as distinct as external and bodily organs, that help us to see, hear, taste, smell, and handle external things, are distinct from internal and intellectual faculties, that help us to see and know things spiritual and divine.

But, says Mr. *Robe*, "I am afraid he won't get many, "even Seceders, that will chuse to put his conclusion to the "trial;" that is, who will chuse to want their bodily senses, in order to try if they shall know God better without them. This taunt upon the Seceders might be easily borne: But what if, striking at them, he be found wickedly strengthening the hands of an Atheistical generation, and profanely striking at religion itself, and its highest exercises, and ignorantly stabbing it under the fifth rib? For I must tell Mr. *Robe*, there are even among the Seceders that would heartily chuse sometimes to be out of the body, and all its senses that God hath given to it, that they may know him better than they do; and who would chuse, not only to be quite free of a body of sin and death, but also of burdensome bodies of clay too, with all the darkening glasses they now see him by, that they may see him face to face, and know as they are known, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. and that they may be like him, by seeing him as he is, 1 *John* iii. 2. This was the exercise of the saints in scripture, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Phil.* i. 21, 22, 23. and it hath been, and sometimes is the exercise of some of these whom Mr. *Robe* mocks as Seceders. They are not indeed so wicked (as the taunt imports) as to chuse to put out their own bodily eyes, that they may see God better with the eyes of their souls, which is one of the profane flights of that author's fancy and imagination; but they would chuse sometimes, that God himself would hasten, in his own time, to shut their eyes by death, that they may know him more perfectly and in a more immediate way, than now they can do, while these vails of flesh and sense interveen between him and them. So that Mr. *Robe* is here, under the mask of a poor witticism, though I hope unawares, sporting at one of the most eminent degrees of the saints spiritual exercises on earth. Indeed they cannot well be supposed to make such a choice as this, who find, according to Mr. *Robe*'s scheme, their own natural senses and imagination so greatly helpful

to the knowledge of God, that without them they can have nothing of it; and consequently whose natural sensations are the great part of their religion, and such a great help to it; and who, instead of knowing God by faith and supernatural illumination, boast so much of their knowledge of God by sense and feeling, fancy and imagination. I fear many of Mr. *Robe*'s late converts have put his conclusion too much to the trial; and that, their root being rottenness, their blossom must go up as dust. May the Lord deliver them that have been ensnared and plunged into deep delusions, and have been carried away with fancies, imaginary ideas and strong imaginations, instead of saving faith and real religion.

Sect. XIV.

In the following paragraph, *p.* 63. I see nothing that will be worth my readers while to have my answer to it. Though I be accused of tricks therein, for not quoting a page of Mr. *Robe*'s letter, wherein he fancies I wronged him, it is enough he hath now quoted it himself. I grudge not his doing all the justice to himself he can. But the main thing he here accuses me of, is, because I had said that he cites Mr. *Shepherd* and me upon the subject of imaginary ideas, or the images of spiritual things represented to the fancy; whereas he, in answer to this, says, He "never understood imaginary ideas "to be the images of spiritual things represented to the fan- "cy; and therefore never cited us upon this subject." On this I must observe, that, though it may be very true that he says, yet he must certainly understand the images of corporeal things in the fancy representing spiritual things, such as the subjects we were cited upon, namely, *hell*, which is a spiritual thing, as it consists in God's everlasting wrath, represented by the fancy to the mind in the image of *fire* †, which is a corporeal thing; or the *human nature of Christ*, which, as it is the object of faith, is a *spiritual* thing represented by the image of a *human body* which is a corporeal thing, *&c.* Now, Mr. *Robe*'s bringing in any such corporeal things to be the object of faith, the object whereof cannot be any thing corporeal as such, but only spiritual and invisible, this made me to charge Mr. *Robe*'s language with the absurdity of making spiritual things, that are objects of faith, to be the objects of fancy, and corporeal things, that are objects of

† *Maccov. regulæ theol.* p. 162. Ignis qui dicitur fore in inferno, non erit materialis; sed dicitur ita figurative, quia aget in diabolos; corporeus autem ignis id præstare nequit.

of fancy, to be the objects of faith; as I have shewed above, sect. 5. *p.* 152. This being the case then, there was no wrong done to Mr. *Robe:* For indeed spiritual things cannot be represented to our bodily senses and imagination any other way than by the images of bodily things. And this is the reason why I have said, that these images, or imaginary ideas, cannot properly be helpful to the knowledge of spiritual things; whatever occasion they may give to the understanding faculty, to deduce spiritual conclusions from them, or from any such figurative and metaphorical expressions. *Sense* and imagination helps only to know the outward matter of a metaphor; *reason* helps to know the rational and natural meaning of it; and *faith* helps to know the spiritual import of it. If reason and judgment shape it according to the image that sense or imagination forms of it, it will be sure to misshape and misunderstand it.

Since Mr. *Robe* acknowledges he never understood imaginary ideas to be the images of spiritual things represented to the fancy, and that our senses and imagination can only help us to see and form conceptions of corporeal things, it would seem strange, he will also have them greatly helpful to the knowledge of God, and spiritual things; which they can no otherwise be than as he explains *p.* 10. as above I noticed; namely, by presenting images to the superior faculties; that is to say, the images of corporeal things are helpful to the understanding of spiritual things. This is the same with saying, that the image of a body is a help to know God, who is a Spirit, and the image of a man helpful to know the person of the God-man.

Upon this subject I may observe, that those creatures that have a *vegetative* life, and no more, like plants, they have no *sense.* These that have a *sensitive* life, and no more, like beasts, they have no *reason.* These that have a *rational* life, and no more, they have no saving faith. But those rational creatures that have also *saving faith,* may be possessed of all the powers and qualifications forementioned at once; yet so as, however subordinate and subservient one of them may be to another, yet they cannot properly be helpful to one another without and beyond the sphere of their activity; that is, the life of *vegetation,* or growth like plants, cannot help him to see, or hear, or exercise any bodily *sense.* Again, the life of *sense,* or mere sensation, outward or inward, like that of beasts, cannot help him to *reason* or reflect upon things spiritual, or superior to the nature of bodies. And finally, the *rational* life that is capable of this, yet cannot help to the spiritual

spiritual life of faith, which lives upon things that are supernatural and supernatural, and which requires supernatural faculties, not by destroying the substance of the natural ones, but by such a supernatural renovation of them, as great, as if they were quite removed, by him who says, *Behold, I make all things new*, Rev. xxi. 5. and *Isa.* xliii. 19, 20, 21. *Behold, I will do a new thing*, &c. *The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls*, &c. *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.* And so it is said of the person that is a new creature, *vers.* 7. *I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him.* Indeed, whenever a person is thus a new man, by being *renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him*, Col. iii. 10. then he, being brought back to the knowledge of God, comes to know himself and the creatures in another manner than he did: He sees God in every creature, perhaps in every pile of grass upon the ground; he can see the power, wisdom and glory of God therein. His *senses* help him to see no more but the *matter*, his *reason* sometimes may help him to reflect upon the *author* of that matter; and only *faith* helps him to see *his God* and *Father*, and the glory of God in Christ, as not only the former of all things, but the author of the new creation as well as the old. Dr. *Owen*, on the *person of Christ*, *p.* 37. says, "The revelation and repre-"sentation of God in Christ and the gospel, is received by "*faith* alone; the revelation and representation of God in "the works of creation and providence, is received by *rea-*"*son* only, *&c.*"

The law of subserviency that God made to himself, whereby he makes one thing in providence introductory to another, is no part of his moral law given to us. The first thing that God teaches us in the moral law, is, to reduce us again to the knowledge, not of the creature first, and then of him; but first of himself, as our God in Christ, saying, *I am the Lord thy God; thou shall have no other Gods before me.* Why, what other gods can we have? Even the objects of sense, the creatures, and things that can be seen with the eye, or painted on the mind by imagination. Therefore the next word of God in that moral law is, *Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image*, &c. If this command forbid all *molten images* of God, then it prohibits also all *mental images* of him who is God, so as to make these the objects of worship, and consequently all imaginary ideas of Christ as man; and injoins us, seeing he is man, to know, worship and believe in him as *God-man*, or God in our nature; not *as man*, for thus he is not God,

God, and hence not to be worshipped in that respect. If the imaginary idea be here brought in as a help to the knowledge of God, it is brought in contrary to the moral law; of which that foresaid law of subserviency that God hath made to himself, is no part. Mental images of Christ then are no better than molten images, *profitable for nothing*, Isa. xliv. 10. Though *made after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man*, vers. 13. yet it may be said of those that fall down to it, and worship it, as *vers.* 18. *They have not known nor understand: for God hath shut* [or, as in the margin, *daubed*] *their eyes that they cannot see; and their heart that they cannot understand.* Yea, even to such a mental idolater it may be said also, as *vers.* 20. *He feedeth of ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Alas! there is nothing more evident, than that there is nothing but a lie in the *right hand of all* our natural imaginations of God in the person of our Immanuel, who can be seen by no eye but that of faith; and of whom mens natural imaginations are *teachers of lies*, and *gravers of an abomination* equal to theirs that *fell down to the stock of a tree*, Isa. xliv. 19.

The sum of Mr. *Robe*'s three assertions, *p.* 60, 61. of his *letter*, together with his three things he makes necessary to the right knowledge of Christ, *p.* 31. and 54. comes to this, That we can have no knowledge of God nor of Christ, but what comes by the necessary adjutancy and previous helpfulness of our outward senses and inward imaginations, terminating upon some corporeal object, some visible creature; no knowledge of God, till first our senses and imaginations view some material object in this visible world, that is, some creature; no knowledge of Christ, the God-man, in his person, till first we have an imaginary idea of him as man, that is, a creature; and hence no knowledge either of God or Christ, but by some creature, that can be seen with the eye, or viewed by the fancy: And consequently, that our senses and fancies viewing the creatures, are the first necessary and natural means and helps to all the knowledge, whether natural or saving, which we have of God; that is, the creatures are the first teachers, and our senses and imaginations the first powers and faculties helping to receive the instruction, or to convey the knowledge of God or Christ to the understanding; or, which is all one, that the understanding by the help of these senses and imaginations obtains that knowledge.

In opposition to this doctrine, I shall here further offer my

my thoughts in the following discourse upon this momentous subject.

Whatever secondary views of God, or knowledge of him, we may have by means of the creatures, or works of creation, looked at rationally; yet I am far from thinking that the first or primary knowledge we have of God, whether by nature or by grace, can be by the creatures, as the first or leading means thereof, or helps thereunto, in a proper sense.

It may be fit, that, in the entry on this discourse, I explain how far the senses are useful and necessary to the knowing of things within their sphere. And here I may in some particulars copy after the learned *Mastricht*, in his *Gangræna, cap.* 29. *De hominis sensibus*; who there says, he copies much after the learned *De Vries*. Where we find what the orthodox doctors of divinity and philosophy had in controversy with the *Cartesian* philosophers; who, to establish the position they laid down, relating to their innate ideas of all things, and asserting the senses to be so deceitful and fallacious, as not at all to be trusted, therefore discarded them as of no use for judging or discerning, for confirming or evidencing the truth or falshood of any thing; and consequently all ocular demonstrations and sensible proofs were to be rejected, and only the intellect attending to innate ideas to be regarded. This is that extreme, tending to *Scepticism* on the one hand, which true philosophy and right reason will never admit; no more than it will allow gross *Epicurism* on the other; which refers all judgment of what is true or false to the senses, as if these could never deceive us, but were to be the very rule of judging, as things appeared to them; insomuch that the favourers of this opinion have not scrupled to assert such a childish and rustick error as this, That the sun, moon or stars were no bigger in themselves, than they appeared to the bodily eye. Therefore sound Philosophers have embraced the middle, or *medium* between these extremes, as the safest, rendering to the understanding what properly belongs to it, namely, its power of judging in matters intelligible, and to the senses, guided by reason, what belongs to them, in matters that are sensible; and directing, that these different faculties contain themselves within the sphere of their own proper objects, and that the senses meddle not with things that are called *merely intelligible*; because it is acknowledged, there are some things which directly, and by themselves, do no way affect the senses, (or very insensibly and slightly;) and which therefore are not to be measured simply by the immediate perception of the senses.

Hence they may be reckoned blind, that can see no other thing by their understanding, than what they have seen or can see with their eyes. And hence some have fallen into great heresy, says one†, —— *cùm ceratis sensuum alis ad divina evolare contenderent: When with senses waxed wings they would strive to flee toward things spiritual and divine.* Which yet is not to be understood, as if sensation were quite useless in relation to things spiritual and divine: Though these cannot be the proper objects of sense; yet in so far as sensible things are set before us in scripture, to excite our minds to the contemplation of these spiritual things, that are represented thereby; in this respect, the senses are many ways profitable and necessary, not as helps to know and discern spiritual things, which is impossible; but as helps to discern these sensible things that directly pertain to sense, that, through them, the rational soul may be stirred up, and take occasion to learn the spiritual lessons designed thereby: For these sensible things and signs will be quite unprofitable, if people rest in the simple perception thereof by their bodily senses. In order, then, to keep the middle path between the two foresaid extremes, the learned allow and assert,

1. That, for a foundation of all common knowledge, and of arts and sciences among men, there are some first principles of truth in us, and as it were connatural to us; such as, That the same thing cannot be and not be at the same time; That two and two make four; That there is such a thing as natural body, motion, place, time, *&c.* But they reject the *Cartesian* ideas, as being no such principles, but mere figments.

2. That the senses in men are not so fallacious and deceitful, but that, under the conduct of reason and judgment, they are to be admitted as judges of the truth and certainty of sensible things; and their testimony is not to be rejected in these matters that are their proper objects, when presented duly, without the intervention of some other sensible objects or *mediums*: (In which case, it is mens judgments rather that deceive them, than their senses; as if a clown should look to the sun, and judge it no bigger than his bonnet, it is not his sight that deceives him, but his judgment, not considering the distance, or interveening *mediums.)* They admit, that the senses apprehend all things that are, either *in themselves*, or in regard of their effects, *apparent* and *sensible.* In this respect, *nothing is* said to be *in the understanding that is not first in the sense.* (Which holds, I suppose, with

† *Verulamius de augm. scient. lib.* 1.

with reference to the acquired knowledge of things by sensible means and demonstrations, but not with reference to that innate knowledge in the rational soul, which I conceive to be imported in *Rom.* i. 18. and ii. 11. and even in some of these first principles of truth just now mentioned; nor with reference to these objects that are purely spiritual and merely intelligible.) Yet hence,

3. They own, that to cast the testimony of the senses in matters that are within their sphere, would be to cast all the numerous testimonies given in scripture for the confirmation of the truth, by sensible evidences and ocular demonstrations: As when we are called to lift up our eyes and look to the visible creation, and thence gather proofs of the invisible power and being of God, *Psal.* xix. 1. 2. *Rom.* i. xx. *Acts* xvii. 17. Hence sensible signs and seals in the sacraments are prescribed for the confirmation of our faith, as when it is said, in the Lords's supper, *Take ye, eat ye; this is my body.* Thus the faith of the doubting disciple was roused and confirmed by that which was the object, not of faith, but of sense, when he was allowed to put his hand into Christ's side, *&c.* And thus the Apostles certify their hearers of the truth, and provoke their faith, by arguments drawn from their senses, 1 *John* i. 1. namely, by what they had *heard with their ears, seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands.* Thus many sensible things that cannot, as such, be objects of faith, but of sense; yet may be occasions, arguments and confirmations of faith: And are they not then great helps to faith, may one say? I answer, not properly, but in an improper and figurative sense; even as light may be said to help a man to see things, but not properly: For, though light discovers objects, it cannot help a man to see them; this belongs properly to the eye. Sensible things are not properly helps to faith. Sense properly helps to look at these visible and sensible glasses; and faith, or spiritual understanding, helps properly to look through these glasses to the spiritual and invisible objects exhibite therein: Even as the eye of sense helps to look to the visible heavens, and the eye of reason to look to the invisible God therein.

4. They own, that such is the close connexion and conjunction betwixt soul and body, and betwixt the intellective acts of the one and the sensitive acts of the other, that the rational soul can scarcely think of any thing, unless the forming of the conception be occasioned by some sensation. Hence proceeds our natural readiness and facility in perceiving corporeal things, rather than spiritual. And hence *Cartesius* him-

ſelf ſays, *That our mind does with the greateſt difficulty attend to thoſe things that are neither preſent to ſenſe nor imagination, but merely to the underſtanding.*

So far do the orthodox doctors allow in theſe matters. But, while they ſhew that mens ſenſes are to be credited, and their teſtimony not to be diſtruſted, they at the ſame time affirm, they are not helps or leaders to any knowledge, but that which relates to their proper objects, to wit, ſenſible things. And, when they ſpeak of the teſtimony of the ſenſes, they do not mean *naked ſenſes* and perceptions, (which would indeed be bruiſh judges); but they mean (as I told above, *chap.* I.) *the prudent uſe* of the ſenſes, reſulting from the rational ſoul; of which brutes are deſtitute, though they have both ſenſe and perception: which is alſo proven againſt the *Carteſians*, (*Gangr. cap.* 30.) Thus it is not the ſenſes and imagination that are the firſt and leading helps even to any natural knowledge in men, whether *innate* or *acquired*. The former, called *innate*, is owing to the natural make of the rational ſoul; the latter, called *acquired*, is owing to reaſon exerciſed, or to the ſenſes guided by reaſon and judgment, making a prudent uſe and improvement of objects preſented to the ſenſes.

Mr. *Robe* ſeems to me ſometimes as if he were daſhing himſelf againſt one, and ſometimes againſt another of theſe oppoſite rocks of *Scepticiſm* and *Epicuriſm* unawares, while, on the one hand, his imaginary ideas ſeem to be ſib to the *Carteſian* innate ideas, images, notions and ſpecies of all things, which their learned antagoniſts ſhew to be the original of *Scepticiſm:* And yet, on the other hand, his making our natural ſenſes the great and leading helps to ſpiritual knowledge, ſeems to border upon *Epicuriſm*. I own he ſeems not to have any of theſe extremes directly in his view; perhaps he will hate to be reckoned upon any one of theſe ſides: But I ſpeak of the tendency of ſome of his words, to my apprehenſion. If by his imaginary ideas there ſeem to be any countenance given to the *Carteſian* figments about innate ideas of all things, the danger of this extreme is laid open by the foreſaid writers, as laying the foundation for *Scepticiſm*, or rather for *Atheiſm*. It is well known, (ſay they,) how the *Scepticks*†, after they began to diſtruſt their ſenſes, at the ſame time they began to diſtruſt all things perceived by the ſenſes, and to doubt

† On the ſide of the *Scepticks* wrote *Parmenides* thus:
Nec tibi communis ſenſus perſuadeat unquam
Quicquam; ut fallaces oculi, aut judicet auris,
Aut lingua: at ratio dirimat diſcrimina rerum.

doubt of every thing; and so made the very truth, reality and existence of bodies to be dubious and uncertain to themselves, as supposing they had no senses, and that bodies were mere chimeras.

The direct reverse of this is, the extreme of the *Epicureans*; who made bodies, atoms, space, gravity, the principles of all things, and bodily senses their only rule of judging and discerning truths †. Both these *Atheistical* extremes seem to strike directly against God, our maker, *by whom all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible*, Col. i. 16. The *Sceptick* extreme seems to doubt of, and deny all things *visible*, and the *Epicurean* to deny all things *invisible*; and so both, as it were, conspiring to deny God, the author of the visible and invisible creation: The one, by magnifying their *ideas*, and making all things visible subject thereto, discarding sense; the other, by magnifying their *senses*, and making all things invisible under their government, dethroning *reason*.

To this last especially the present subject pertains. And to me it seems a dangerous principle, to maintain, That all knowledge arises from our senses and imaginations as the first grand helps. I judge all natural knowledge of God has God for its proper and immediate author and original, as well as its object and end: For *of him, and through him, and to him are all things*. And I think, to deny this first spring of natural knowledge, and to ascribe it to *creatures*, and *senses* perceiving the creatures, as the first rise of that knowledge, seems to border upon the *Epicurean Atheism*. Why? He that is the *beginning* is the *end*, Rev. i. 8. xxi. 6. xxii. 13. If the senses are the beginning, it looks as if senses, and the voluptuous gratifications of them, were to be the end also. *Voetius*, in answer to that question, Whether *Epicurus* was an Atheist? though he shews, from *Laertius* and *Cicero*, that he acknowledged a Deity, and wrote of the nature of the gods, and piety towards them; yet answers in the affirmative, because he denied a providence, and made the *summum bonum*, the chief good, to ly in *pleasure* ‡; That is, (in the pure pleasure

† In behalf of the *Epicureans* wrote *Lucretius* thus:

Quid referemus enim, quid nobis certius ipsis
Sensibus esse queat, quo vera & falsa notentur?
Ex sensu namque omnia quæ sint credita pendent:
Cui nisi prima fides recte fundata valebit,
Haud erit occultis de rebus quo referentes
Confirmare animos quicquam ratione queamus.

‡ *Voetius de Atheismo*, p. 208.

ſure of the mind, reſulting from the practice of virtue, ſay ſome, who would vindicate the *Epicureans* from the aſperſion of bad morals; but others, that they made their chief happineſs ly) in the gratification of the ſenſual appetite. Which ſeems indeed the native conſequence of the principles of *Epicurus*: His denying the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul, and making matter and ſenſe the beginning and original of all things, it landed in making ſenſe and ſenſuality the end. And hence the cry of the *Epicure, Utere temporibus, præſentibus utere rebus.* The ſame with that which the Spirit of God expoſes, both by the Prophet *Iſaiah* and the Apoſtle *Paul: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we ſhall die,* Iſa. xxii. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 32. It was a good advice given by *Automedon* in a *Greek* epigram, which we have thus tranſlated:

Learn to be wiſe; let Epicurus *chaſe*
To find his atoms, and his empty ſpace.

On this ſubject Dr. *Stillingfleet* obſerves ‡, that Polytheiſm was the firſt occaſion of Atheiſm. The obſcene poets of *Greece* had ſo debauched the common underſtandings of people, as to make them believe ſuch things concerning their gods, ſo incongruous to human nature, as all who had any ſenſe of goodneſs left, could not but lothe and abhor ſuch deities, who had been but poor mortal men, and thoſe not of the beſt reputation neither. When reputed Atheiſts among them, ſuch as *Dionyſius, Diagoras,* and others, mocked their ſolemn worſhip of theſe deities, and when they were derided by intelligent men, while yet the order of the world ſeemed to tell them there was really a God, though theſe were none; thoſe who had philoſophical wits, ſuch as *Democritus* and *Epicurus,* ſet themſelves to work, to ſee if they could ſalve the phenomena of nature without a Deity; and therefore aſſerted the origin of the univerſe to be only by a fortuitous concourſe of infinite little particles. But herein they befooled themſelves and their greedy followers, who were glad to be rid of theſe anxieties of mind, which the thoughts of a Deity and an immortal ſoul did cauſe within them. And though *Lucretius (de rerum nat. l.* 1.) boaſts of his maſter, That, when mens minds were ſunk under the burden of religion, *Epicurus* was the firſt true giant who durſt encounter the gods, and overthrow them in open field, (though the greateſt triumph in this victory would have only been, to become like the beaſts that periſh;) yet *Cotta* in *Tully (de nat. deor. l.* 1. *c.* 86.) informs us quite otherwiſe, That *Epicurus* was ſo far from gaining his beloved eaſe and pleaſure by his ſentiments, that never was a ſchool-boy

‡ *Origines Sacræ*, p. 364, 365.

boy more afraid of a rod, nor did any enemy more dread a conqueror, than *Epicurus* did the thoughts of a God and death. *Nor* [says that author] *did I ever see any fear so much these things he had alledged were not to be feared, (mortem dico & deos,)* namely, *God and death.* And *Epicurus* himself, after all his pains, knew it was to no purpose to endeavour to root out the belief of a Deity out of the world; and therefore owned, *that nature itself had stamped a notion of God upon the minds of men.* Which is more than some modern philosophers grant.

The *Cartesian* writers, that move to the other extreme, in denying our natural senses their proper place in judging of any truth from sensible evidences, seem to make all knowledge depend upon their *ideas*, as the former do upon their *senses*, and both of them upon themselves; forgetting much the God that made them, and *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*; as the Apostle *Paul* cites *Aratus*, one of the *Greek* poets, saying. And to this purpose said *Ovid, Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.* It is true, the ideal doctrine of the *Cartesians*, seems sometimes to confound their innate ideas with innate knowledge; (as Mr. *Robe* his ideas, even imaginary, with knowledge;) as if these were the same. But their learned opposers allow the latter, *viz.* innate knowledge, but deny the former, *viz.* innate ideas. Yet upon the confounding of these two some of their arguments proceed; such as these of *Claubergius* mentioned by *Mastricht* †. *If all knowledge* [says he] *arise from the senses, then it is a wonder that they are not most wise who are most led always by their senses; that beasts, which excel men in their sensitive faculties, do not excel them in wisdom and knowledge; and that those who have no bodily senses, as God and angels, should yet have most wisdom and knowledge,* &c. These arguments or objections, to which answers are given *(ubi supra,)* seem, in my opinion, to arise from their confounding natural *innate knowledge*, which is allowed to be in men, with their *innate ideas*, which are denied: For I think these arguments prove the former, but not the latter; nor do they prove that the senses are not necessary to the knowledge of sensible things as such, or that they would be better known, merely by the understanding attending to innate ideas of them; which would be a drawing away the mind from the knowledge of these things as they are *in themselves, sensible* things, and substituting in the room thereof a mere imaginary knowledge forged in the brain.

It

† *Gangræna*, p. 473.

It is certain, that human knowledge *acquired* by the rational view of ſenſible objects, and thus by the natural ſenſes, differs greatly, not only from that knowledge which God and angels have, who want bodily ſenſes; but alſo from that ſenſe and perception of brutes, that want rational ſouls, and conſequently want that innate knowledge and natural light that men have. Therefore, though I reject the *Carteſian* hypotheſis relating to their *innate ideas* of God, and of all things; yet I allow the *innate knowledge* of God, and of all things elſe, according to the meaſure and degree of that knowledge we have of him, and from him, as the root and original of all *acquired* knowledge: For, as *Charnock* ſays, *vol.* II. *p.* 481. "The knowledge of God by nature and creatures is neceſ-"ſary as a foundation for higher apprehenſions, and for turn-"ing to God. Man without it would be wholly brutiſh, and "incapable of inſtructions in Chriſtianity, as an ox or a "ſheep: And though man deſerved by ſin to be deprived of "this natural knowledge, yet God kept it up as a ſtock on which "in time to ingraft other principles in the diſcoveries of "Chriſt." And therefore, though theſe and the like *Carteſian* arguments above mentioned, do not at all, in my opinion, prove the main point for which they are produced, to wit, that there muſt be innate ideas, that is, images, repreſentations, intelligible ſpecies of all things, in the mind; which ſeems to be nothing but chimerical notions, that abuſe the reaſon much more than the outward ſenſes can be ſuppoſed to do: Yet I judge theſe ſame arguments of theirs, ſerve ſtrongly to prove the point which I have in hand at preſent, namely, to demonſtrate the neceſſity of that previous natural innate knowledge in all men which I ſpeak of; and to ſhew, that our knowledge of God and of the creatures, does not ariſe from our ſenſes and imaginations; which would do us no ſervice this way, if previous thereunto there were no innate knowledge and natural light given us of God, which is ready, according as he has prepared it, like an inward ſpark, to catch the outward flame of ſenſible objects preſented to it.

God would not be knowable by the creatures, if there were not ſome dark remains and ſparkles of that natural light and knowledge which God gave at firſt to *Adam:* So that ſome knowledge of God in himſelf muſt be previous to any knowledge we can have of him by the creature; becauſe, as the creatures have no capacity of knowing God themſelves, and cannot tell us what they know nothing of; ſo we could not know God by them, though they have ſome footſteps of their divine Author upon them, if we had nothing of the knowledge

knowledge of God without them. As a man cannot know his own face by the help of a glass, or by looking to himself or his image therein, if he had no previous knowledge of himself; no more could we know any thing of God by looking through the glass of the creature to see therein his power, wisdom, and other perfections, if we had not an intellectual faculty and rational soul, with such an internal understanding by natural light, as makes us know him again, when we see him represented to us in such a glass.

Adam certainly knew God, though not in his essence, yet in himself, abstract from the creature, and in such a way as the creature could not make him known. He knew God in his relative being, as his God and friend; otherwise he would never have fled away from him with shame, when the friendship was broken by his sin. He knew God before ever he knew the creatures; for he was created after God's image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. He knew God in these things of God which the creatures could not teach him, namely, the mind and will of God as to his duty; for he had the perfect knowledge of the law of God, which was written on his mind, and concreated with him. God impressed it upon his soul, and made him a law to himself; as the remains of it among the Heathen do testify, *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. So that what knowledge of God *Adam* had, he had it from God himself originally; not from the creature; whatever additional views he might have of God, by contemplating the works of creation. And thus all the saving knowledge of God in those that are renewed in the spirit of their mind, is from God himself, *Eph.* iv. 23. For *the new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him,* Col. iii. 10. *The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into their heart, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.* This light of knowledge was eminently in man at his first creation; though now his light is darkness, and every creature a kind of teacher, that reads a lecture concerning God, his being, wisdom, power and goodness. Man the master of all the creatures is become a scholar to all the creatures. Yet as the creatures were not at first the first teachers, so neither are they now. If man had no knowledge of God *without them,* he could have no knowledge of God *by them,* Rom. i. 19.

Maccovius and *Arnold (Distinct. p.* 39.) say, The knowledge of God is either natural or revealed. For the former they cite *Rom.* i. 20. for the latter *John* i. 18. The natural know-

ledge of God [ſay they] is that which puts forth itſelf of its own accord in adult perſons of a ſound mind, ſo as, though none teach them, they are perſuaded that there is a Divine Being, moſt wiſe and powerful, that made and governs the world, and the things that are in it; and that this great Being ſhould be religiouſly worſhipped: But that we are to know, natural knowledge is not of nature, as ſeeing, hearing, for example, are, tho' *Voſſius* impertinently talks ſo; but that, when one is come to the uſe and exerciſe of reaſon, though he has no teacher, this knowledge ariſes from innate principles.

Maſtricht, in his forecited book, intitled, *Novitatum Carteſianarum gangræna, p.* 204. ſhewing that God is not known by ideas, images, repreſentations, but by his own eſſence coexiſtent with our ſouls, ſpeaks thus: "As it is ſaid, *Acts* xvii. "27, 28. *That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might "feel after him, tho' he be not far from every one of us, for "in him we live and move and have our being*; you ſee that "we ſeek God, (to wit by thinking, knowing,) as it were "by *feeling*, as one who is not far from every one of us. "If God therefore is thus intimately preſent, by his own "eſſence, with our underſtanding, to what purpoſe are i-"deas? To what purpoſe images of a thing preſent? Nor "does this imply any abſurdity; ſince God is the firſt thing "knowable, even as light is the firſt thing viſible: And "therefore as light needs no ſpecies of light by which it "ſhould be ſeen, ſince by it all things are ſeen; ſo truly "there is no need of any idea, ſpecies, image or repreſen-"tation of God in us, whereby we may ſee him in our mind, "ſince *ipſum videamus per ſeipſum*, we ſee him by himſelf. "If this does not ſuffice, pray tell, what do we think, what "do we know, when we think of God, or know the Divine "Being? Is it not that, than which nothing can be known "more or better? From which 'tis plain all things elſe ſtand "infinitely diſtant. Is it not ſomewhat that is eternal, om-"nipotent, omniſcient, immutable? But this very thing is "God, or the Divine Being. And to ſuppoſe, that any cre-"ated being ſhould offer or preſent to us a ſimilar repre-"ſentation, in order to give us the thought and knowledge "of him, is moſt horrid and abſurd."

As *Adam* knew all the creatures, and gave them names ſuited to their nature; ſo what makes us know different creatures in ſome meaſure according to their kind, when we ſee them, but ſome remains of nature's light and knowledge that was in *Adam*, though now miſerably defaced? But the knowledge of God himſelf and in himſelf was the firſt that *Adam* had;

had; and the knowledge of God by the creature was but secondary: For the knowledge he had of the creatures, was rooted and graffed in the knowledge he had of God; which made him know them as they were the creatures of that God, whom he knew by the innate knowledge of God in which he was created perfect. Though this image of God be totally defaced since the fall, as to any saving effect; yet such small spunks and sparkles of natural light remain, that our senses and imagination looking some time to the creature, may occasion the dead habit of natural knowledge, or the dormant seeds of truth, in those *who hold the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. i. 18. to rise, and rouse themselves, through the help of their rational and intellectual faculties, to reflect upon the Author of the creation they behold. But this God who is the centre of truth they could no ways know, if that dormant seed of truth was not previously sown. If man had never been made after the image of God in knowledge, he could never have known God by any outward means whatsoever, no more than other animals do, or than he himself in some cases does, notwithstanding his senses and imagination: For a man may have these, and yet be delirious, distracted, and the like, and so destitute of the exercise of reason. Yea a man may be made like *Nebuchadnezzar*, to have the heart of a beast, and so be wholly destitute of reason, as he was, till *his understanding returned to him*. Hence there are some cases wherein the senses and imagination viewing their objects, yet cannot so much as be the occasion of the knowledge of God; far less are they at any time proper helps to it. And however the truth of *what* God is be utterly lost by fallen man; yet, I say, if there were no dark remains of this truth of the Divine Being, *that* there is a God of glorious perfections, and if there were no such innate knowledge, without the creature, or previous dormant seeds thereof; then it were impossible for the visible creation to awaken this seed, or to infuse and create this knowledge of God, by their help and assistance: No visible creature could ever give him any eye to look through it, to its invisible Author; nor be any ways helpful properly to that knowledge of God, which he behoved to have the latent image of in his nature, before ever the creature could give him occasion to exert that rational power of reflecting on the Divine Original and Author of that creation which he sees †.

† Sound doctrine teaches to this purpose in several tracts of divinity. The

We know all things to be what in a true light we see them to be, because we had that knowledge of them by nature, before ever we saw them; otherwise we could not know them to be what they are, by our seeing them. Even as *Adam* (as I said) could not know the creatures to give them their names, suited to their nature, unless he had got that knowledge from the God of nature given to him before ever he saw them; thus it is with us: Though we have lost such a knowledge of God, as thereby to know the creatures, and such a knowledge of the creatures, as to give them all their names according to their natures; yet so much of this knowledge remains, that whenever we see them, then we know them, in some respects to be what they are, and that this, or such a creature is distinct from such an other, because we had this knowledge before. The mere sight of things cannot give us so much knowledge as to distinguish between the stones on the earth, and the stars in heaven; both which beasts may see, as well as men. Our knowledge of things visible in their different nature and kind, is previous to our seeing of them; though the sight of them gives occasion to the sleeping faculty of knowledge we had before, to awaken and exert itself, and to know the compass and extent of our own knowledge, whenever objects are presented to it; which whenever they appear, then we know them to be what our senses see them to be: And this we had before we saw them; otherwise neither these creatures, nor our sight of them, could ever have given us that knowledge we have of them.

I would not here be understood, as if I adopted these *Platonick* hypotheses, which suppose the *species* of things comprehended in the mind, called by them *ideas*, are divinely ingenerate in us; as if whatsoever is in this life learned more perfectly, were but a certain mere remembrance of, or calling to mind what was once in the mind before, (*Mastricht, Gangr. p.* 208) even as they speak also of an intelligible species or idea of God; on which, the same author says, the *Papists*

The words of one of them in *Latin* are, "Ex naturâ verò naturata, hoc est, "τῶν πάντων structura, cognoscitur Deus; quatenus mundus manifestat "eum qui fecit mundum, & potentia cognoscendi Deum naturaliter ho"minibus insita est. Rom. ii. 14. ait Paulus, *opus legis scriptum est in cor*"*dibus eorum*: nam ubi aliqua legis divinæ est cognitio, & quidem cog"nitio naturalis, ibi aliqua etiam est cognitio Dei tanquam Legislatoris; "juxta regulam, Cognito uno relatorum, cognoscitur & alterum. Pu"tà, si non per omnia, saltem quoad quæstionem, *quod sit*: atqui, A"postolo teste, in Ethnicis est aliqua naturalis legis divinæ cognitio. "Ergo, & in iisdem est aliqua naturalis Dei, Legislatoris, cognitio." *De Deo trin-uno, p.* 3.

pists build their religious worship of images, (*p.* 215.) But I understand such an image or knowledge of the creature as is consequential upon, and some way connected with the natural innate knowledge of God; which I shall a little further explain by and by. For our right knowledge of ourselves, and of all other creatures of God, bears some proportion to the knowledge we have of God himself; *in whose light we see light*, and by the knowledge of whom we know all things else. And according to the measure and rectitude of our knowledge of him, such is the measure and rectitude of our knowledge of the true nature, use and end of his creatures. This knowledge I suppose to ly seminally in, and to be concreated with the rational faculty of understanding. Though I don't confound, but distinguish between the faculty of knowing things, and the actual knowledge of them; yet, as there can be no act, where there is no habit, principle or power of acting; so there can be no actual knowledge of any thing, where there is not a capacity for knowing: Which capacity comprehends seminally or radically that knowledge I speak of at present; and which I call an image, only in so far as it is a branch of the small remains of that natural image of God after which he created man at first. Our senses, therefore, and imaginations terminating upon corporeal objects, can help us to no knowledge that we had not before in the respect above mentioned. They only give occasion to us to know what we some way knew before, or to dilate and extend the previous knowledge of sensible objects we had, to new presented objects of that sort. The sight of the object itself, does not help the faculty of seeing.

The image of any thing absent doth not help the imaginative faculty, or power of imagination; it is only the object thereof, and does not help the subject: As little doth the sight of any object help the knowledge of that object; it is only the occasion of knowing it. Thus the sun rising and shining does not help any man to see; only it discovers itself and other things also to the sense of seeing, and so gives occasion to the subject seeing, to take up the object seen. Sense and imagination can give a man no more subjective knowledge than what he had before. However reason may improve upon occasion of the new objects of sense presented; yet our senses and imagination, in and of themselves, considered abstractly from reason, can add no more help, and give no more light or knowlege, than it can do in brute beasts. God not only as the God of nature has given the light of reason, but as the God of grace hath given the light of revelation. All

partake

partake of the former, as some do of the latter. Dr. *Arrowsmith*, cited before, on *John* i. 9. says, "Light is twofold, "natural and supernatural. Natural light is either the light of "the sun, the light of reason, or the light of conscience. Su- "pernatural is either the light of the word, the light of grace, "or the light of glory." To bring in fancy or imagination as a proper help to any of these, is to put out the light, and to put darkness for light. As we could get no manner of help by the sun to see the creatures about us, if we were blind and wanted eyes; so we could get no manner of help by the sight of the creatures to the knowledge of God or spiritual things, if we wanted reason; by the help of which only we can draw conclusions, such as that, *Psal.* xciv. 9. That, if we can see and hear, much more can God who formed the eye, and planted the ear. Reason only can draw inferences or consequences from things proposed to it, for the furtherance of light and knowledge. Our senses and imagination can present nothing to the understanding but corporeal objects; which if the understanding had no manner of knowledge of before, it could have no knowledge thereof after they are presented. If the God of nature had not given this universal knowledge of visible things, present or absent, our sight of them when present, or fancy of them when absent, could never help us to know them; because they have no knowledge of themselves to convey; they are only the objects of the knowledge of such as God hath already given that knowledge unto. God, who gave us that knowledge *virtually* and *potentially* before ever the objects were presented, he, by presenting them, gives occasion to exert that faculty and power, so as we know them *formally* and *actually*; yet so as these occasions give no help to the faculty of knowing. Yet, if any please to say, that sense and imagination help us to know things visible and corporeal, when by *help* they understand only *occasion*, as *Mastricht* says, *(Occasione sensuum ferè cognoscimus,) By the senses as occasions we almost know*, I would not dispute about words with them, providing they do not ascribe knowledge itself, even of corporeal things, to the things known, which are but the objects of that knowledge; but can give no more help to knowledge itself, than the rising of the sun can give a man's eyes, and help him to see it.

We cannot have the image of any thing in our mind *actually* by seeing it, unless we have the image of it *virtually* and *radically* before we see it. This I suppose will hold both in nature and grace.

1. We could have no knowledge of God by the creature, if

if we had nothing of the dark remains of the image of God by nature, and the light thereof, which God hath given to mankind, *Rom.* i. 19. and ii. 14. By the image of God here I again assert that I do not understand any thing similar to the *Platonick* or *Cartesian* ideas, images, representations, or what they call intelligible species; as if in the mind of man there were some kind of a figure or picture of God, so as the knowledge of God might consist in the knowledge of the mind, or of that idea or image of him therein: Which, as the learned *Mastricht* says, *is not to have God in the understanding, but an idea of God, (Gangr. p. 208.)* Nor is it the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of what they call an idea or image of him in the mind; which they seem to make the same with God himself, as to his vicarious and representative Being; and consequently is infinite: Which is vastly absurd, as the same author more largely shews. But as the image of God is said in scripture to consist in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, *&c. Eph.* iv. 24. *Col.* iii. 10. so, by the image of God, I here mean that part of it which consists in the knowledge of God, and particularly that knowledge of God which is natural, in contradistinction from gracious and saving knowledge; and that natural knowledge of God which is *innate*, and imprinted on the minds of all men, which, as *Mastricht* says, arises from the *very Being of God coexistent with the understanding*, in contradistinction from that natural knowledge of God which is called *acquired* by the contemplation of the creatures in a discursive, rational way of arguing from the effect to the cause, *&c.* the foresaid natural and innate knowledge of God, is what many, I suppose, understand when they speak of an idea of God, it having become a fashionable way of speaking. In this case I quarrel none about different words, when there is no different meaning. However, I say as above, we could have no knowledge of God by the creature, if we had nothing of the dark remains of the image of God, or of that *innate* knowledge of him by nature, and the light thereof, which God hath given to men, prior to any view they can have of him in the creature.

2. We can have no saving knowledge of God in Christ, till God restore his image, by *renewing us in the spirit of our minds, and in knowledge, after the image of him that created us.* If God should manifest himself to us, before we have his image restored, we could not know him: He must first *give us an understanding to know himself,* 1 John v. 20. We know him when he manifests himself by the image of him

him that he previouſly gave, by *ſhining into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt.* Chriſt is revealed *objectively* to many, that yet do not know him; becauſe they have not his image in their hearts: Chriſt not being formed in them, and they not being renewed in the ſpirit of their mind, but perhaps having only an imaginary idea of him as man in their head, the *god of this world hath blinded their minds, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* But where once his image is formed in the *underſtanding* by ſaving illumination, and in the *heart* by regeneration, then, whenever this glorious object is anew preſented in the glaſs of the word, they know him by the image of him that was previouſly formed in them by his word and Spirit, ſo far as to lead them to, and capacitate them for ſeeing and knowing him in that glaſs. Not by any imaginary idea, but by virtue of the *new creation in Chriſt Jeſus*, bearing his image that created us, we become capable to ſee and know again what he revealed in his word before, and to know more and more of it, or to grow in knowledge according as that ſeed of knowledge ſown in the mind is watered with new influences of light, or renewed diſcoveries of the glory of God in the word; not by any view or knowledge firſt of the creatures. *Charnock*, vol. II. *p.* 438. ſays, "Chriſt never directed men to the knowledge of any thing "but God. He never took fleſh, nor laid it down, to make "us philoſophers.——He was a Prophet to manifeſt the name "of God, not the nature of the creatures.——Had theſe been "neceſſary means, the ſcriptures had been full of natural "demonſtrations; it had been a book of nature, inſtead of "a book of grace.——[And ſpeaking of the creature] it can "never of itſelf help us to the knowledge of divine things; "——it hurts and hinders men from the ſaving knowledge of God and Chriſt.——The intent poring upon red "hot iron, or other metals, blinds the eye, and hinders it "from ſeeing the ſun, or other things elſe by it. Too much "intenſeneſs in carnal wiſdom dims the eye to ſpiritual objects."

From what hath been ſaid, it appears, that the knowledge of God *by himſelf* is the firſt thing that takes place both in nature and grace, before ever God can be known *by the creature.* Only ſuch is now the degenerate ſtate of man ſunk into ſenſe and among the creatures, he hath ſo far loſt the ſight of God in himſelf, that he is blinded with ſeeing nothing

nothing but the creatures, and vain images of the creatures, by which he is ready to shape a God to himself, after the image of the creature, or by some imaginary idea of corporeal things, having become *altogether vain in his imagination.* God, in commiseration of this doleful state we are in, condescended to give us an image of himself. *Christ, the image of the invisible God,* is such an one, that though he be the visible image of the invisible God, yet we are not led by him away from the invisible God to a visible image; because, as he is the object of faith, he is the *invisible God* in our *visible nature,* yet, not the object of faith as he is *visible,* but being Mediator God-man, we may go to him without a Mediator, because he is God in our nature; but we cannot go to God without him, or to God out of Christ; because Christ is the Mediator between God and men, and *no man cometh to the Father but by him.* Nor can we see or know God savingly but in him, in whom we see all the glory of God; which we could not do, if he were not God. And we can never know him to be God, or God-man, by any imaginary idea of him as man: Which I have shewed to be directly oppposite to faith. A corporeal object or true body as such, is what faith itself cannot believe to be an object of faith, but must believe it to be an object of sense; otherwise it could not be a true body, to be seen, felt, *&c.* So that to make such an object an object of faith, is most absurd. Nor is it here as in other cases; our senses and imagination may give occasion to our reason and faith, to think upon spiritual objects presented to them by corporeal things and images. But it is not so here: For though we only by *reason* may be helped to see God in the creatures which we can conceive, because by divine appointment they subsist in themselves, and so are conceivable; yet the human nature of Christ is no such creature; and therefore inconceivable without the help of faith. It is true, the human body of Christ now in heaven may be the object of an imaginary idea; but the image of it presented thus to the mind, being seen as a human body subsisting in a human subject or person, as other men are seen, (without which view of it we can have no idea of it at all,) is therefore directly opposite in the *idea,* to what it is in *reality:* Whereas the image of other creatures may be the true image of them. Therefore the imaginary idea of Christ as man, is so far from being helpful to the knowledge or conceiving of him as God-man in one person, that it cannot be the remote occasion thereof, but a hinderance; unless God take occasion thereby to bring things out of their oppo-

sites; as he did light out of darkness, life out of death, heaven out of hell, holiness out of sin, and all out of nothing. But then this is by a law of subordination and subserviency peculiar unto God alone; but not by any law of adjutancy or helpfulness, whether natural or moral, given to the rational world.

No man can see visible objects, unless he have *eyes*, or know invisible things, unless he have *reason* or faith, or both; so as by *reason* to know them rationally or naturally, and by *faith* divinely or spiritually. We know nothing, unless God *give us understanding*, 1 John v. 20. We cannot see, unless God give us eyes, nor hear, unless he give us ears, nor apprehend the image of any thing, so as to know it, unless that image be some way formed within us. How can we know what or whose the copy or image is, unless we know the original? Can any know that such a picture is the image of a man, unless he previously know the difference between a man and a horse? We have the general knowledge of the image of a man, before we can understand it is the image of a man that we see: And we have the particular knowledge of such a man, before we can understand that the image is indeed the image of such a particular man. Hence all the knowledge we have of visible things by senses and imagination, is what we had *subjectively* before ever they were objected to our sense and imagination. Therefore the sight of the visible objects we see, helps not our visive faculty, any more than it can give us eyes to see them. So far less can our bodily eyes help us to see things invisible: Which, so far as nature and grace go, can only be seen *naturally* by the eye of *reason* or natural understanding, and *spiritually* by the eye of *faith* or spiritual understanding; but not at all by the eye of sense, or any imaginary idea, which can look no farther than outward visible corporeal things. And as the *objective* knowledge of visible things can extend no farther than the *subjective* knowledge or previous faculty we had of seeing or knowing them; so the *subjective* knowledge we have of created things, cannot be physically generated or helped by the objective view thereof. I mean, the object seen gives no help to the power of seeing, no more than it can create eyes. Thus no creature seen or known can create or increase *subjective* sight or knowledge, however that sight may be dilated *objectively*. It is otherwise, I own, with reference unto the saving knowledge of God: Though he cannot be known without previous spiritual understanding; yet the more the object is revealed, the more may the subjective knowledge and faculty

faculty itself be enlarged and strengthened, because God is a living and life-giving object. There is a creating virtue and power in the object discovered, and therefore the faculty may be increased by viewing the object; hence it is said, *Beholding his glory, we are changed:* Yet still it holds true, we can know no more of him than he *gives us understanding to know*, 1 John v. 20. No light can give life and sight, but he who is the light of the world, and the light of life, *John* viii. 12. The light of the natural sun cannot give us eyes, nor help our sight, though it gives occasion to these that have eyes, both to see it, and other things that are corporeal, which are the objects of sense and imagination. Nor can these corporeal things discovered to the bodily senses, give any proper help, whatever occasions they may give to the sight and knowledge of spiritual things; which only can be seen by a rational and believing soul. Even though, while the soul is in the body, it doth not act without the bodily senses, that is, without their *presence* it does not; yet without their *help* and proper assistance it doth; even as the bird cannot fly in the air without its body; yet the body gives it no help in flying, but only the wings. Its body would rather hinder its mounting up, and help it to fall down to the ground. And no otherwise helpful are the powers of the body, when such helpfulness is ascribed to them as belongs only to the wings of the soul.

Since I wrote what is above in these few pages, I am the more confirmed in several of these things I have advanced, by having met with the following words of *Charnock*, *vol.* II. *p.* 478. "Some question whether there be any natural knowledge of God imprinted upon man, or the knowledge of any one thing planted in him; but, as he grows up (say they) he acquires a knowledge of things, from the objects of sense, and improvement of them by the understanding he is endued with, and, making deductions and conclusions by the help of reason, arrives to the apprehension of things. Yet this knowledge of God may be called natural, because, by the view of the visible things in the world, natural reason frames a certain conclusion, That there is a God, the cause of these excellencies he sees in the creatures. But the scripture seems to intimate a notion of God in the minds of men, *Rom.* i. 19. *That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them*; a notion *within*, an excitation of it by objects *without*; that there is an internal light which doth manifest him, as well as an external evidence of him by the creatures. But, whether this be the import of this scripture or no, most

" underſtand no more by *manifeſt in them*, than manifeſt to " them. Yet, ſince there is a law of nature in men, which " is the rule of the excuſings or accuſings of conſcience, in " regard of which they are ſaid to be a *law to themſelves*, " *Rom.* ii. 14. and the *work of the law* ſaid to be *written in* " *their hearts*; the notion of a ſuperior power, to which man " is accountable for his actions, muſt be as natural as that; " becauſe it is the foundation of the actings of conſcience; " and the ſuperſtructure, being from an implanted light, is " not like to be without a foundation of the ſame kind. To " what purpoſe ſhould conſcience accuſe, if there were not a " ſupreme being, under whoſe cenſure ſuch actions did fall? " And, ſince the Heathens had a natural ſentiment, that the " extravagancies they were guilty of, *were worthy of death*, " Rom. i. 32. they muſt therefore have as natural a ſenti- " ment, that there was a judge of abſolute power to inflict " that death upon them, which their own conſciences told " them they were worthy of.—The notion of a God ſeems to " me to be as natural, as that law of nature, and thoſe mo- " tions of conſcience. And though this was more clear to " man at his creation, and while he remained in a ſtate of " innocence, yet it is not blotted out of the mind of man. " —All the outward objects which we ſee in the world, " whence we argue that there is a God, ſeem only to revive " and awaken that implanted notion, which lay covered with " the rubbiſh of the fall: For, upon the firſt view of things, " with what eaſe doth this ſentiment riſe up in our minds? " And nothing is more obvious, nothing more eaſily enter- " tained than this, *that* there is a God, and *that* this God " is a mighty, powerful and perfect Being. Which evidenceth " that there is a ſpark of it in the mind of man, which catch- " es the outward flame ſo quickly upon its approach, as the " ſnuff of a candle not quite extinguiſhed, will ſnatch " and attract the flame of another which comes near un- " to it." In a word, the being, goodneſs, wiſdom and power of God, are manifeſt, not only outwardly by the works of creation and providence, but alſo inwardly by the light of nature, *Rom.* i. 19, 20. and ii. 14, 15. *Pſal.* xix. 1, 2, 3. *Rom.* i. 32. *Conf. Chap.* 1. *Sect.* 1†.

Man, in his firſt creation, being made after the image of God, had communion with God, and knew him in himſelf, and the creatures in him, and in order to him. But, when once

† *Maſtricht prodrom. p.* 82. ——— Iſtas omnes ſuæ imaginis particulas ſuperſtites nobis à lapſu Deus voluit, ——— ut ſint velut ſemina, unde divina imago, per gratiam reſtaurationis, poſtmodum reflorefceret.

once man by his fall *departed from the fountain of living waters, to cisterns that can hold no water*, or from God to the creature; then he so far lost the knowledge of God in himself, and knew no more of him than what he saw or could see in the creature. Formerly he conversed with God, and in God with the creature: But now he is conversant with the creature; and, abstract from revelation, hath no other way of conversing with God, but in or by the creature. This way of seeing and apprehending God by outward things, that are the work of God's hands, is become natural to man ever since the fall. And therefore nature's teaching is mostly in this way, by the creature to lead to some notions of the Creator; having turned our back toward him, and our face to the creature. But, when God teaches savingly and efficaciously, in order to restore that image of God that we lost, he restores to advantage, first, that knowledge of God that we lost by our fall, and says, *Let there be light*, and in that light discovers us to ourselves, and gives us the knowledge of the creatures again in him. And, till we know God, we neither know ourselves, nor any thing else as we ought to know. But, though God is the first object of all spiritual and saving knowledge, yet, in condescension to our now lapsed, natural state, which cannot well take up God directly, but in the creature reflexly, he comes as far down to teach us in this very way as it is possible for him to do, namely, by assuming our nature into personal union with himself; yet so as that it is God that is first discovered coming down, and coming in to our nature, that we may see him there in a creature. If it were a mere creature, as I said above, we could not see God there, to any saving advantage; any more than we can see or be acquaint with God savingly, by seeing any other creature, sun, moon, or stars. " Were not Christ the " essential image of the Father in his own divine person, he " could not be the *representative* image of God unto us, as " he is incarnate: For, if he were a man only, however mi- " raculously produced and gloriously exalted, yet the angels " above, the glorious heavens, the seat and throne of God, " with other effects of creating power and wisdom, would " no less represent his glory, than it could be done in him. " Yet are they no where jointly nor separately stiled the *i-* " *mage of the invisible God*, the *brightness of his glory, and* " *the express image of his person*; nor doth God shine into " our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the " face of them. And it argues the woful enmity of the carnal " mind against God, and all the effects of his wisdom, that,

" whereas

" whereas he hath granted us such a glorious image and re-
" presentation of himself; we like it not, we delight not in
" the contemplation of it; but either despise it, or neglect
" it, and please ourselves in that which is incomparably be-
" neath it." Dr. *Owen* on *the Person of Christ*, *p.* 381.

According to the new covenant, *Jer.* xxxi. 34. the first saving lesson that God teacheth his people, of whom he says, *They shall be all taught of God*, is, God himself, *They shall all know me.* —— But, because our nature was sunk among creatures, and into *flesh*, and we therefore could not possibly come up to God, therefore God in the person of his eternal Son condescends to come down to us, and become a creature, and is made *flesh* by an inconceivable mystery. But in mere creatures God cannot be seen savingly. Thousands of ages have been making out this. He cannot be known, till he himself come and shew himself in his own light: Which he does in the person of his own Son in our nature; and in our nature so constitute and fashioned, as that it never was a mere creature, nor ever subsisted but in that person of the Son of God, and is to be seen by faith only, under the saving illumination of the Spirit.

The first lesson, I say again, that God teaches, is, God himself, *They shall all know me.* Light being the first work of the new creation, as it was the first word of command in the old, *Let there be light*, the good work is not first begun upon the senses and imaginations, but upon the understanding; and, as *Charnock* expresses it, *vol.* II. *p.* 440. " The
" new nature is conveyed by the knowledge of God and
" Christ, *Phil.* i. 9, 10. *Col.* iii. 10. As ignorance and er-
" ror were the deformity of the old man, so wisdom and
" knowledge are the first line in the beauty of the new." For, says he, *p.* 238. " The understanding is the original wheel
" which God primarily sets in order; from whence he does se-
" condarily influence all the other works which depend upon
" its guidance."

When God draws his image on a man, he begins with the understanding, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. As limners in painting begin with the eye, God, in forming us for himself, first forms the eye, by which we see him. It is true, we do not see him savingly but in Christ, and we come to God by Christ only as the way: But we mistake grossly, if we suppose it is mere humanity, or Christ as man, that is the way to God. It is indeed the man Christ, not Christ as man, but Christ as Mediator, God-man in one person, that is the way to the Father. And therefore he that says, *I am the way*, says also

in

in the same place, *He that seeth me, seeth the Father.* So that it is God come down in our nature, to make God known to us. And *in this light only we see light*, Psal. xxxvi. 9.

Mr. *Robe* proved to my hand, that it is only Christ as a mere man, yea as a mere human body, or a corporeal object, that is the object of an imaginary idea, since that idea can have no other object; therefore he proves also to my hand, against himself, That that which is the object of an imaginary idea, can as such be no part of the object of faith, unless a mere man could be the object of it. Which *Turretine* calls sacrilege in the Socinians, (*Loci communes, tom.* II. *p.* 628.) *Fides in merum hominem, qualem Sociniani Christum fingunt, sine sacrilegio poni non potest*, Jer. xvii. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.* Thus *Charnock, vol.* II. *p.* 350. "As Christ is the Son equal with the Father, we "believe in him as God. As he is Mediator, we believe in "him as God's servant, furnished by him with authority and "ability. He is the proper object of faith as he is one with "the Father. If he were not God, he could not be the ob-"ject of trust, Jer. xvii. 5, 7. *Cursed be the man that trusteth* "*in man, and maketh flesh his arm. Blessed is the man that* "*trusteth in the* LORD." This LORD cannot be the object of fancy, but only of faith. Which leads me to

CHAP. VI.

Shewing in what respects the human nature of Christ is the object of faith, so as it cannot be the object of any imaginary idea.

MR. *Robe* having again and again charged me with *blasphemy* and *heresy*, *p.* 46, 47, 73. as if I had asserted in terms, *That the human nature of Christ is no part of the object of faith*; what he means by my having done so in terms, I cannot understand, unless he is ignorant of common language and logicks both, with reference to what it is to say things *in terminis*; that is, in so many words. If this be his meaning, he knows it is a falsehood: But he himself proves, by adducing my words, that I do assert no such thing in terms. They are his own terms, and not mine; for mine are what he repeats thus, namely, *Can that be any part* of the object of faith *which is perceptible by the fancy of every man, and obvious to natural discerning?* Again, *Nothing sensible, nothing corporeal, nothing visible, can properly be the*

object

object of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, *Heb.* xi. 1. And again, *That part of Christ which is visible, was the object of sense on earth, is the object of vision in heaven, and may be the object of any man's fancy or imagination; but never was, or ever will be the object of faith, but as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby,* &c. I am content that these and other words of mine in that appendix Mr. *Robe* quarrels, stand recorded there to the end of time, to shew the injustice and ignorance of his charge which he infers from them. And though none that understand the gospel, will need that I should say a word to defend myself against such a charge; yet I am content to take this opportunity of explaining the matter more fully; hoping it may be profitable to the reader, and that it may contribute to lead some ignorant persons out of these dark chambers of imagery, into which Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine, or any doctrine of that sort, may have led them. I shall therefore here consider, (1.) How the human nature of Christ cannot be the object of faith as it is the object of an imaginary idea. (2.) How, and in what respects, it is the object of faith, so as it cannot be the object of fancy and imagination.

First, To shew that the human nature of Christ as it is perceptible by every man's fancy, and obvious to natural discerning, can be no part of the object of faith, that is, doth not belong at all to the object of saving faith; instead of many arguments, I shall illustrate this from a comparison that I make of a twofold *word of God.* (1.) His word *doctrinal*; that is, the Holy Scripture, containing the revelation of his mind and will, made visible, by being put in writing. (2.) his word *essential* or *personal*; that is, Christ, the second person of the glorious Trinity, made visible when the Word was made flesh.

I. Now as to the first of these, the word of God contained in the Scripture is, I assert, the only rule of faith, and the immediate object or ground of it; but not as it is a visible and material book, perceptible by every man's eye when it is present, or fancy when it is absent, or out of the way; and thus the object of any man's sense that hath occasion to look to it, and handle it. A Child, or an idiot, may be taken up with the gilded broads without, or the curious cuts within it, or even read the letters, syllables, words, and turn over the leaves of it, without being capable to search the scripture, or notice the sense of it. In this respect I say, as it is a visible material book, it cannot be called the word of God, more than any other book of the same general nature with

with it; that is, of the same bind, bulk, paper, print, with letters and syllables of the same kind, and equally material, visible and palpable by every one. In this sense it is not the rule nor the object of faith; because it is the object of sense, a mere creature, and the work of a man's hand, wherein nothing of the image of God can be directly seen, but only pieces of matter put together by human art. But the word of God is not properly palpable, material and corporeal, but invisible, incorporeal and spiritual; therefore called the *incorruptible seed*, the *word of the Lord that endureth for ever: My words*, says Christ, *are spirit and life*. It is properly God himself speaking to us, and revealing his mind and will, by this outward mean of his own appointment: And therefore he calls us to *search the scriptures*, to *believe his word*, and *to take heed to it, as unto a light shining in a dark place, a light to our feet. In this light*, being God himself manifesting his mind and will, *we may see light*, and by faith see the invisible God through this glass of his revealed will. Thus the word of God doctrinally considered, is the object of faith; not as it is a material book, for thus it is only the object of sense; but as it is spiritual, invisible, incorruptible, immortal: For thus the word of God, especially his word of grace in the gospel, is called, 1 *Pet.* i. 23, 24, 25. *Isa.* xl. 8. The *Westminster* Assembly wisely say, "The word of God (which "is *contained* in the scriptures of the Old and New Testa- "ment) is the only rule, *&c.*" The invisible and spiritual things *contained* in these scriptures, are properly the word of of God, and the object of faith: For there we see the image of the invisible God set before us, and God, who is a Spirit, declaring to us his mind and will in a way suitable to his nature, though by instituted means suitable to our nature. Thus the scriptures, as they have such spiritual *contents*, are the word and mind of God, and ought to be highly esteemed by all that desire to be saved to eternity: But, as they are merely a *material* book, they are neither the object of faith nor worship. And the neglect of this consideration brought into the church of *Rome*, and from them to the church of *England*, the idolatrous and superstitious use of the Bible, particularly, in that mode of swearing, by *touching and kissing the gospels*: Of which a divine writes, saying, "It hath been observed of "former times, that, as the superstitious use of the Bible pre- "vailed and became fashionable among people, the true and "proper use of it wore proportionably out of fashion." It is true, says he, "the Bible and images differ as to their spi- "ritual nature; and so does the *Sun* and *Satan*: But, as to

" their *esse adorabile*, or their objective presence before the " worshippers, there is no difference; for both are creatures, " memorative vicarious objects, at whose presence, and " through whom, God is adored." Thus a divine ordinance may be abused to idolatry, and become an idol. Fallen man is naturally fond of visible objects in worship. And, if Satan be on a design to bring Protestants, who have renounced images, back to this way of it, what object can be less suspected, and fitter for his purpose, than the Bible itself, a visible thing to be slipt in between God and the worshippers? To this purpose speaks the author of *The new mode of swearing considered*; which he shews also to be directly contrary to our solemn covenants, in favours of which he speaks to excellent purpose. But, leaving this digression, I say, the word doctrinally considered, made visible by being put in writing, is not the object or ground of faith, as it is a visible material book, an object of sense; but as it is a spiritual invisible thing, evident to faith, which is *the evidence of things not seen.* Even so,

II. The word of God *personally* considered, namely, the eternal Son of God, made visible when the *Word was made flesh*, or assumed our human nature, *John* i. 14. is not, as corporeal, and visible to the bodily eye, and perceptible by every man's fancy, or obvious to every man's natural discerning, the object of faith; but as, and because he is God in our nature. And his human nature is not the proper object of faith and worship as such, but as it is, and because it is united to the divine person of the Son of God, and as it is the person of Christ designed and denominate by his human nature, or *God manifested in the flesh.* To make the human nature of Christ as such the proper object of faith or worship, is just such idolatry as is forbidden in the second commandment. The formal nature of which idolatry is *a doing* religious *service unto that which by nature is not God*, Gal. iv. 8. Where the Heathen idolatry is described in these very terms, *Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.* The human nature of Christ as it is corporeal, visible and perceptible by every man's fancy and imagination, is a mere creature. And God will not be a sharer with a mere creature in religious worship and honour. He will never accept nor approve that worship whereof any the least part is offered to it, *Isa.* xlii. 8. *I am* JEHOVAH, *that is my name; and my glory* (in whole or in part) *will I not give to another.* Matth. iv. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* See also *Deut.* vi. 13. *Zeph.* i. 4, 5. God discharges all

all his subjects, under the highest pain, from offering him worship in, by, or through any mere creature; but only in, by, and through the man Christ Jesus, who never was a mere creature, but is God co-equal, and co-eternal, and co-essential with the Father and Holy Ghost. But now, the human nature of Christ as it is perceptible by every man's fancy, and the object of an imaginary idea, can be no other than a mere creature: For it surpasses the power of natural imagination, to form the image of one who is both a creature and a Creator; or of an incarnate God. The human nature of Christ is no human nature subsisting, like other human creatures, in a human subject or person, or by itself, and in itself, as its natural subject or *suppositum*; which can only be the object of an imaginary idea: And consequently it is no true image or idea of the human nature of Christ: Nor can such an idea help, but must rather hinder the right understanding even of Christ's human nature. For, though the understanding (as Mr. *Robe* alledges) may instantly form a complex idea of his being more than a man, yet, by the help of such an idea, the understanding can only form an additional consideration, annexed to what was the object of the imaginary idea; which, being no true, but a false image of Christ's human nature, will not mix or incorporate with the true object of faith, the person of the God-man. Therefore, before the understanding can form a right thought or view of Christ as to his human nature, subsisting in his divine person, it must necessarily throw away that mental image of Christ as man, as a spurious brat, and as the brood of mere natural and carnal imagination; that it may conceive aright of a mystery above natural understanding, and far more above all natural senses and imaginations. All this the understanding hath to do; yet cannot do but by faith and spiritual illumination, by the means of the gospel, and *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.* Christ's human nature, then, as visible by the eye, or perceptible by the fancy, is no part of the true object of faith, but of sense and fancy. That part of Christ which is corporeal and visible, was, as I said, the object of sense on earth, will be the object of vision in heaven, and may be the object of any man's fancy and imagination; but never was nor will be the object of faith, but as the invisible God is seen therein and thereby, according to the scriptures I have cited above upon this head†.

† To this purpose speaks *Augustine, De verbis Domini, homil.* 58. *prope finem.*

The ſchoolmen of the church of *Rome* ſeem to be juſt of Mr. *Robe*'s mind about the neceſſity of a viſible or imaginable picture and image of Chriſt as man. The reaſon one of them gives for it now under the goſpel, is, *After the incarnation of Chriſt, it is lawful to make an image of God; becauſe though as God he cannot be figured or pictured, yet as man he may.* "Alſo it was and is expedient to make an image of "Chriſt; becauſe every one is not literate, nor hath leiſure to "read: Therefore the fathers invented ſome pompous pi-"ctures deſcribing in images what Chriſt did for us; which "may be of uſe to the quick memory. To which reaſon of "the fathers, "another [ſays he] may be added, becauſe "*majùs movent viſa, quàm audita: We are more moved with* "*things we ſee, than with what we hear.*" All theſe are the words of a learned papiſt†. *Peter Martyr*, who went far enough in allowing images, tells us, *(Loc. Com. p. 152.)* "That *Thomas Aquinas* is to be wondered at, for giving "this argument in favours of images, That God forbade the "*Jews* to make images, becauſe at that time the *Word* had "not aſſumed the human nature." And then anſwers, *Quid hoc ad rhombum?* &c. Then he makes mention of the ſeventh ſynod, (which was not allowed by the Papiſts, and) which was held by *Conſtantine* and his ſon; wherein it was decreed, "That Chriſt was not to be painted, feigned or fi-"gured, no not as touching his human nature. And the "reaſon is ſet down and aſſigned, becauſe it is not poſſible "to deſcribe by art any thing elſe but his human nature. "Wherefore they that make ſuch things, ſeem to embrace "the *Neſtorian* error, which ſeparated the human nature "from the divine." When above I ſuppoſed Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine of mental imagery touching Chriſt's human nature to ſavour of *Neſtorianiſm*, I had not glanced at this paſſage, ſo as to ſee my opinion fortified by the decree of ſuch an antient ſynod. But, as faith comes by hearing, not by ſeeing any picture outward or inward, and as it is the evidence of things not ſeen; ſo Chriſt's human nature, as viſible by the eye, or imaginable by fancy, is but falſely called the human nature of Chriſt: Which is what cannot be ſeen here to be what it is, but only by faith‡. Arguments from reaſon, beſide

finem. "Perfectam in Chriſto humanitatem adoro, quòd à divinitate "ſuſcepta atque unita divinitati eſt; ut non alium atque alium, ſed u-"num eundemque Deum, & hominem Dei Filium eſſe, confitear, &c."

† *Ricardus de Mediavilla* ſuper quatuor libros ſententiarum *Petri Lombardi, p.* 90.

‡ Formale relationis non incurrit in ſenſus, ſed percipitur vel intelligitur fide. *Maccovii Centuria, p.* 181.

side what I have advanced, might be here multiplied to shew, that that which is perceptible by every man's fancy, or obvious to every one's imaginary idea, can be no part of the object of faith.

The invisible God, and he only, is the proper object of faith, or God in Christ is the object of saving faith; *but* no man's fancy or imaginary idea can see the invisible God, or God in Christ, nor any part of this object, as it is the object of faith: *Therefore* that which is perceptible by every man's fancy or imagination, can be no part of the object of faith. The *major* is clear from many scriptures, such as *Isa.* xlv. 22. *Matth.* i. 23. *John* xiv. 9. The *minor* is clear from many concessions Mr. *Robe* hath made, That the objects of sense and imagination are only corporeal. Therefore the conclusion is evident, That that which is perceptible by every man's fancy, can be no part of the object of faith.

Again, That object which is only corporeal, and no more, cannot be the object of faith, or any part of it; *but* that which is, or may be the object of every man's imaginary idea, is only a corporeal object, and no more: *Therefore* the human nature of Christ, as it is the object of every man's imaginary idea, cannot be the object of faith, or any part of it. The *minor* is owned by Mr. *Robe*. But, if the *major* be denied, namely, the first branch, That that object which is only corporeal, and no more, cannot be the object of faith, this is evident; because that which is no more but corporeal, is the object of no more but sense if present, and fancy if absent; and, as such, is not so much as the object of understanding, being of the nature of sensibles, not intelligibles; far less can it be the object of faith, the object whereof can neither be sensibles as such, nor intelligibles as such: For to make things that can be naturally seen and understood, the objects of faith, is to turn faith into sense and fancy, and to destroy the nature of faith, which is *the evidence of things not seen* nor understood†. The human nature of Christ, as existing in his divine person, is the object of faith: And therefore is, and since its formation still was more than human nature, namely,

† *Clavis artis Lullianæ, p.* 41. Ne igitur concedamus illud esse verum quod sensui vel intellectui repugnat, exceptis articulis fidei; qui quidem non sunt contra, sed supra rationem.

§ *Ars magna Lullii, p.* 457. Supposito quòd intellectus possit intelligere de Deo ea quæ per fidem potest credere, fides quidem destrueretur. —— Quid est fides? Ad quod respondendum est, quòd ipsa est virtus à Deo data, ut per ipsam credamus id quod per eam intelligere non possumus. ——Quare est fides? Et est respondendum, quòd ipsa est, ut intellectus per eam possit credere id quod per seipsum non potest intelligere.

namely, human nature existing supernaturally; which cannot be understood; and therefore must, as an object of faith, be believed, *(viz.* the *esse personæ.)* Whereas that part which is supposed to be understood, and of which we can form an imagination, *(viz.* the *esse substantiæ,* or) the human nature, cannot as such be the object of faith, but of sense, or vision, or fancy; as is said above. (2.) If the other branch of the *major* be denied, *viz.* that it can be no part of the object of faith; this I prove thus. Christ, the object of saving faith, is only one undivided and indivisible object: *Therefore* that corporeal object of fancy can be no part of the object of faith. That Christ, the object of saving faith, is an undivided and indivisible object that cannot consist of, nor be divided into parts, I have already proven above. Though he hath two distinct natures, yet they do not subsist separately, but jointly in one and the same divine person of Christ. And therefore as it is only by unbelief and vain carnal imagination they are viewed separately; so it is only by faith that this glorious object is seen to be one, and one God seen to be in him, 1 *Tim.* ii. 5.

Secondly, I come now to shew, in what respect more particularly Christ's human nature is the object of faith, so as it cannot be the object of fancy, or of an imaginary idea. It is fit to observe, that, when a person or thing in the abstract is said to be the object of faith, such as the person Christ, or the thing that is understood by the humanity of Christ, that person or thing, being the *subject*, cannot be understood to be the object of faith properly, without supposing a *predicate*, or something enunciate † or declared concerning that person or thing, or some proposition, truth or record anent the same. Therefore, when the person Christ is spoken of as the object of faith, then the meaning is, Christ as held forth in such words, propositions, truths or records, as these, namely, *That he is the Son of God*; That *he is the Sent of God*; That he is *the Redeemer*, and the like: For then faith hath a truth or testimony concerning him to believe; and lays hold upon his person as exhibited in that testimony, by receiving it, and *setting to its seal, that God is true*, John iii. 33. Hence an unbeliever is one that *believes not the record that God hath given of his Son*, 1 John v. 10. Again, when any thing relating to Christ is said to be the object of faith, such as his human nature, then the meaning is, his human nature as held

† Credere enim nemo intelligitur, nisi quatenus *fides ejus propria ad creditum aliquod enunciabile terminatur*; ut recte docuit Thomas. *Daven. quæst. determin. p.* 133.

held forth in ſuch words, propoſitions, truths or records as theſe, namely, That Chriſt *is the Son of David*; *the Son of man*; That *to us a child is born, whoſe name is, The Mighty God*; That *a virgin hath brought forth a ſon, whoſe name is Immanuel, God with us*; That *the Word was made fleſh*; That *he* was *made of a woman, made under the law*, made *in the likeneſs of man*, and the like: Then faith hath a truth or teſtimony concerning that human nature, that it is no natural thing, having any exiſtence in itſelf, ſeparate from the Son of God, but *that holy thing which is called the Son of God*, Luke i. 35. faith receiving the good tidings of great joy, *That unto us is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 10, 11. and conſequently that he is the *true Meſſiah*, the *true Chriſt*, who was the *babe of Bethlehem*; which, however little among the thouſands of *Judah*, was juſtly renowned for being the propheſied place of ſuch a birth. Hence the Chriſtian poet's ſaying, *Sancta Bethlehem caput eſt orbis quæ protulit Ieſum.* The teſtimony of God in his word, or his truth and veracity, (as I have ſaid elſewhere,) is the firſt object and immediate ground of faith. *Charnock vol.* II. *p.* 1161. ſays, "The firſt act of faith conſiders God "as true.——The firſt language of faith in receiving the te- "ſtimony of Chriſt, is a teſtifying, or ſetting to the ſeal, that "God is true, *John* iii. 33. *P.* 218. The underſtanding is firſt "exerciſed about the word as *verum*, true; before the will "be concerned in it as *good*."

Theſe things being premiſed, the human nature of Chriſt is to be conſidered as the object of faith,

Firſt, In all theſe reſpects wherein there is any propoſition, report, record or teſtimony thereof in the word of God, called *the word of the truth of the goſpel*, Col. 1. 5. And in theſe reſpects his human nature cannot be the object of fancy, or of an imaginary idea, but only of faith; becauſe every branch of divine truth relating to any thing, particularly to Chriſt's human nature, is a ſpiritual object; and, as it is a truth, is an inviſible thing, to be ſeen only by that faith that *is the evidence of things not ſeen.* To this purpoſe I have elſewhere ſhewed, that truth is no corporeal thing; no image can be formed of it in the brain, no not of this truth, *That Chriſt is man*, or *that he hath a true body and a reaſonable ſoul*: For this and all other truths belong to the *credenda*, the things that are to be believed; but not to the things that are to be ſeen either by ſenſe or fancy. It is true, many truths of the Chriſtian religion were confirmed by miracles, that were obvious to the outward ſenſe: Yea a great part

of

of the fundamental articles thereof may be called *ſenſible truths*, conſidered materially, ſuch as Chriſt's human nature, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion: All which the Apoſtles relate as things they were eye-witneſſes unto, and which they ſaw and bare record unto. And we ought to believe what was thus confirmed ſo clearly and diſtinctly by the teſtimony of ſenſe; which is not in all things to be diſtruſted and diſregarded, *John* xix. 35. Yet whatever was, or is the object of ſenſe, cannot under that conſideration be the object of faith; no more than ſounds and voices can be the object of the ſenſe of ſeeing, or white and black colours the object of the ſe ſe of hearing. As the object of ſeeing is colours, and the object of hearing is ſounds; ſo the object of one ſenſe cannot as ſuch be the object of another; far leſs can any object of ſenſe be as ſuch the proper and formal object of faith. Bread and wine in the ſacrament, *materially* conſidered, are mere ſenſible objects, and therefore not the objects of faith; but *formally* conſidered, as ſymbols of Chriſt's body and blood, then there is ſome ſpiritual and inviſible food to be found in them for that faith which is *the evidence of things not ſeen.* Thus the human nature of Chriſt, not *materially* or *corporeally* conſidered, but *formally* and *ſpiritually*, as repreſented in ſome doctrinal propoſition, goſpel-truth, or divine declaration or teſtimony, is the proper object of faith. Therefore,

Secondly, The human nature of Chriſt is the object of faith, in all theſe reſpects wherein the inviſible God is to be ſeen therein and thereby: For, ſays Chriſt, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*, John xiv. 9. and ſay the diſciples, *The Word was made fleſh, and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. Now, neither in this nor in the former reſpect can the human nature of Chriſt be the object of ſenſe or fancy, but only the object of faith. The ſame thing may be ſaid of mental images of Chriſt as man that *Clemens Alexandrinus* in his *Adhortat. ad Gent.* ſaid with reſpect to graven images in the worſhip of God: "Chriſtians have "no ſenſible images made of ſenſible matter; becauſe "they worſhip God with underſtanding;" intimating, that to worſhip God and Chriſt by images, preſented either outwardly to the eye, or inwardly to the fancy, is to worſhip ignorantly, and without underſtanding; and that it is unworthy of Chriſtians, that is, even thoſe that know Chriſt to be come in the fleſh; for they know he came not to make that fleſh the object of their worſhip, but God manifeſted

nifested in the flesh. Hence also *Lactantius*, in his *Institut. ad Constant. lib.* 2. asserts peremptorily, "where there "are any images, there is no religion." And yet, more directly to the present purpose, Dr. *Owen*, in his *vindication of the animadversions on Lux fiat, p.* 519. speaking of Christ as the image of the invisible God, says, "Christ is the *es-* "*sential* image of the Father in his divine nature; inas- "much as he is partaker with him in all the same divine pro- "perties and excellencies, and *morally* in his whole person "God and man, as Mediator, in that the love, grace, will "and wisdom of the Father are in him fully represented "unto us; and not in the *outward lineaments of his hu-* "*man nature*, Isaiah lii. and liii.—— And what is all this to "your images, that give us the shape and form of a man, "and of what individual person, none knows? —— And, "whether it be the image of this man or that man, of Christ "himself, or *Simon Peter*, or *Simon Magus*, he hath no ground "to imagine, but what is suggested unto him by his ima- "gination.—— God minds his people, that in the great ma- "nifestation of his glory they saw no manner of likeness "or similitude; which should have been shewn unto them, "had he been by any sensible means or matter to be repre- "sented unto them." So say I; the human nature of Christ is the object of faith, not *materially* considered, in the outward lineaments of it, which can only be the object of sense or fancy, or vain imagination; but *formally* considered, in all these respects wherein the invisible God is to be seen therein and thereby; and consequently in these and the like following respects.

1. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in the marvellous and preternatural *conception* and *birth* of it. And so it is proposed to our faith, *Luke* i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* Faith looks to the testimony of God in his promise of this wonderful birth, *Gen.* iii. 15. *Isa.* vii. 14. and in his word declaring the accomplishment of that promise, as he does in the gospels writ by *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*; and the glory of God's faithfulness, power and pity, manifested therein. In these respects it is the object of faith, and not at all the object of sense and fancy. The imaginary idea of a natural birth cannot help us to believe so much as the truth of the fact, That *to us a child is born, whose name is, The Mighty God:* Nay it cannot

help to believe, that in such a place a woman brought forth a child. It is true, as the imaginary doctrine says, none can believe it without the imaginary idea of a woman and a Child: Yet one's having the idea of both these can no more help him to believe any remarkable story of a woman that brought forth a child, than a man's having the idea both of a *mountain* and a *moon*, would help him to believe that a mountain brought forth a moon. Nay such ideas help people only to know the materials that are the objects of sense. And this knowledge all mankind have, that are in their wits, and have common sense. But this ideal and imaginary knowledge cannot help them to believe any proposition relating to these materials to be a truth or falshood, a thing credible or incredible. The formal object of the human faith of this, That a woman brought forth a child, is some human testimony asserting it as a truth. And the object of divine faith relating to this mystery, the incarnation of Christ, or his human nature, its conception and birth, is the divine testimony, asserting this truth, That a virgin did conceive and bring forth a son, whose name is called *Immanuel, God with us.* Of this blessed wonderful incarnation of the Son of God, and the design of it, some of the ancient fathers write very sweetly; whose words quoted by *Davenant* in *Col. p.* 250. may be thus translated from the *Latin*. *Irenæus* says, "How can the *Ebionites* "be saved, if he be not God who wrought their salvation "on the earth? And how shall man come to God, if God "do not come to man?" *Athanasius* says, "If Christ had "not been the true Son of God, man had not been firmly "united to God: For what a mere man has got, may be "lost, as it fell out in *Adam*. But, that the grace and gift "might remain firm, God put on our flesh, that through "this might be given to us all spiritual good things in sure "possession." *Cyrillus* speaks thus: "The Word is made "flesh, that in him, and in him alone, the nature of man, "being crowned with the praise and glory of innocency, "might be enriched with the Holy Spirit, never to depart "thence now, as it fell out with *Adam*, but to abide therein "for ever." The Son of God was incarnate, that human nature, being pulled away from God by sin, and alienated from the life and fellowship of God, might this way be most fitly restored to communion with God, and most firmly preserved therein; and that, as *Athanasius* said, our flesh, being of earth, might not go to the earth, but, being joined to heaven by the Word that was made flesh, might by him be brought to heaven. This mysterious birth and incarnation of Christ,

and

and the glorious rays of divine power, wisdom and grace thus shining therein, is indeed a sweet object of faith: But there is no footing for fancy here, nor for imaginary ideas.

2. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in the *purity* and *holiness* of it, *Heb.* vii. 26. *He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.* "The bringing forth of our nature "[says Dr. *Owen* on the *person of Christ, p.* 134.] in such "an instance, wherein it should relate no less really and "truly unto the first *Adam* than we do ourselves, whereby "there is the strictest alliance of nature between him and "us, yet so as not in the least to participate of the guilt of "the first sin, nor of the defilement of our nature thereby, "must be an effect of infinite wisdom, beyond the conce-"ptions of any created understanding. And this, as we "know, was done in the person of Christ: For his human "nature was never in *Adam* as his representative; nor was "he comprised in the covenant wherein he stood: For he "derived it legally, only from and after the first promise, "when *Adam* ceased to be a common head. Nor did it "proceed from him by natural generation, the only means "of the derivation of its depravation and pollution: For it "was an *holy thing*, created in the womb of the virgin by "the power of the *Most High.* O the *depths of the wisdom* "*and knowledge of God!*" Here then is a view of the human nature of Christ that can only be seen by faith, but by no imaginary idea.

3. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in the *assumption* of it into personal subsistence with the Son of God. "This the "scripture expresses sometimes *actively*, (says Dr. *Owen*,) "with respect unto the divine nature acting in the person of "the Son, the nature *assuming*, as in *Heb.* ii. 14.—16. *Phil.* "ii. 6, 7. sometimes *passively*, with respect unto the human "nature of Christ, the nature *assumed*, John i. xiv. Gal. iv. "4. Rom. i. 3. This is the foundation of the divine relation "between the Son of God and the man Christ. We can on-"ly adore the mysterious nature of it." *Fulgentius*, cited by *Davenant*, says, *Hoc Deus in nobis salvavit, quod pro nobis suscepit; & illam naturam participem fecit salutis, quam sibi conjunxit: God saves that in us, which he took on him for us; and he made that nature a partaker of salvation, which he united to himself.* Hence I shall open this mystery a little farther in the following words. Christ, the eternal Word, was made flesh; he took on him soul and body, that he might save

ſoul and body. He did not aſſume our perſon; why? Even that our happineſs might ſtand in his perſon, and not in ours; that no man might *glory* in himſelf, or in his own perſon, *but only in the Lord*; and that he might be *all in all*. Chriſt ſaves indeed our perſons, but in a myſterious way; not by aſſuming our perſonality, or by becoming a human perſon, but by receiving that which conſtitutes our human perſonality into his divine perſonality. Soul and body unite conſtitute a human perſon. But though human nature in us is a human perſon, and Chriſt aſſumed our human nature; yet our human nature in Chriſt is not a human perſon; otherwiſe he would have two perſons: But the two diſtinct natures in him are but one perſon. O myſtery of myſteries! He ſaves our nature, and thereby our perſons, by aſſuming our nature, not our perſon; and thus ſaves our nature, not in our perſon, but in his own divine perſon, to which he perſonally united our nature only; that our nature in him might have no human perſonality; and that thus the ſalvation of our perſons might not be owing to a human perſon, but to a divine one; nor to man, but only to God; nay, nor to our nature in God, which was the *inſtrument*, but to God in our nature, who is the *agent*: That is, it is owing to the perſon God-man, whoſe humanity is no perſon, and whoſe perſonality is the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity. From what is ſaid, it is the eaſier to anſwer this queſtion, How he ſaves all that he aſſumed, when he did not aſſume our perſon, but our nature? For he aſſumed our whole human nature, ſoul and body, and ſo aſſumed that which conſtitutes a perſon in us, but not in him: Therefore, by ſaving our nature, he ſaves our perſons; becauſe in us our nature is inſeparable from our perſon. But in Chriſt they are ſeparate; becauſe, had they been united in him, that is, had he aſſumed our nature and perſon both, he had ſaved neither of them; becauſe he would have been but a ſingle human perſon, not related to God as he is, nor equally related to the whole human race, as now he is, when, by aſſuming our nature, the ſecond *Adam* is as ſib to all mankind as the firſt *Adam* was. Had he aſſumed our perſon, that perſon, being but a human perſon, had been unable to ſave us; for his blood had not been the blood of God. Had he aſſumed our perſon, he could have but ſaved that perſon, or behoved to have had two perſons, a weak and a ſtrong one, and our ſalvation behoved to be owing both to God and to man. But God never *laid our help* upon two perſons, but *upon one that is mighty*, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 5. The Son of God therefore aſſumed our human nature

nature into the same personality with himself, that he might save our nature, and thereby our persons; not by assuming our person, but our nature. Here is footing for faith and spiritual understanding. *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God made manifest in the flesh.* It transcends all natural understanding, and much more all imaginary ideas. Again,

4. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, as the invisible God is to be seen in the *union* of it with his divine nature in the same person. This follows upon the assumption just now mentioned, and is called the *hypostatical* union. This is included and asserted in a multitude of divine testimonies, *Isa.* vii. 14. *Matth.* i. 23. *Isa.* ix. 6. Of this Dr. *Owen*, on the *person of Christ*, *p.* 154. says, "That the same "person should be both the *Mighty God*, and a *child born*, is neither conceivable nor possible, nor can be true, but by "the union of the divine and human natures in the same "person†." — *P.* 155. "This, in the writings of the ancients, is frequently called *the grace of union*; God of his "free grace thus designing and dignifying our nature. This "is that peculiar dignity of Christ's human nature, wherein "no creature is participant, nor ever shall be unto eternity. "— The glorious meetness and ability of the person of "Christ for and unto all the acts of his Mediatory office, "flows from this union of his natures in the same person; "without which not one of them could be performed to the "benefit of the church, *&c.*" *P.* 156. "The human nature of Christ hath no personal subsistence of its own, but "by union to the person of the Son of God. With respect "unto this union, the name of Christ is called *Wonderful*, "as that which hath the pre-eminence in all the effects of "divine wisdom."—*P.* 158. "The honour that is due unto the Son of God, is divine, religious, or the owning of "all essential divine properties in him, with a due subjection of soul unto him thereon. But to give this honour unto the man Christ Jesus, without a supposition of the subsistence of his human nature in the person of the Son of "God, and solely on that account, is highly idolatrous." Hence the imaginary idea of Christ as man cannot belong unto, or apprehend any thing of the object of faith; because, as I have shewed before, this manner of the subsistence of Christ's human nature is infinitely above the understanding of all mere creatures. And to make it the object of fancy, is

† Unio naturarum Christi nobis est incomprehensibilis; quia unio est rei finitæ cum infinita. Et si unio inter Christum & ecclesiam nobis est incomprehensibilis, multo magis hoc mysterium. *Maccov. regula*, p. 125.

is to make it nothing but an idolatrous picture. Fancy can suppose no such subsistence: And therefore to make the object of fancy here, the object of faith in any respect, must be with a witness highly idolatrous. "The divine nature as "in that person (says Dr. *Owen, ubi supra, p.* 159.) is its "*suppositum.* In itself it is ἀνυπόστατον that which hath not "a subsistence of its own, which should give it individuation, and distinction from the same nature in any other person: But it hath its subsistence in the person of the Son, "which thereby is its own." Hence, (says the same author, *on the Spirit, p.* 129.) "The personal union of Christ, or "the inseparable subsistence of the assumed nature in the "person of the Son, was necessary and indissoluble; so as "it was not impeached, or shaken in the least by the temporary dissolution of that nature by the separation of soul "and body: For the union of the soul and body of Christ "did not constitute him a person, that the dissolution of them "should destroy his personality; but he was a person by the "uniting of both unto the Son of God."

5. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in the *unction* of it by the Spirit. "The first unction of the human nature by the "Spirit was, when that nature, being formed in the womb "of the virgin by a creating act of the Holy Spirit, was in "that instant of its conception sanctified, and filled with grace "according to the measure of its receptivity†. And being "not in the loins of *Adam* morally before the fall, the promise of his incarnation being not given till afterward, the "sin of *Adam* could on no account be imputed to him: "And being not begotten by natural generation, (as was "said,) it derived no taint of original sin or corruption from "*Adam*; that being the only way and means of its propagation. His nature was absolutely innocent, spotless, and "free of sin, as *Adam*'s was in the day wherein he was created. But, besides this, it was by the Holy Spirit positively endued with all grace; of which afterward he was only capable of further degrees, as to actual exercise, but "not of any new kind of grace. Of this we are told *Isa.* "xi. 1, 2, 3. From his conception he was an *holy thing.* "But Christ was afterward anointed by a collation of extraordinary gifts for the discharge of his office on earth, "particularly his Prophetical office, at his baptism, *Matth.* iii. "and according to the words of the Prophet, *Isa.* lxi. 1. "which Christ applies to himself, *Luke* iv. 18." This supereminent

† *Vid.* Dr. *Owen* on the Spirit, *p.* 136, 137. *&c.*

eminent unction or anointing of the human nature of Christ by the Spirit, is the object of faith. The invisible God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be seen in this glass of Christ's humanity thus anointed; which no imaginary idea can see.

6. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in the fulness of it. Christ's humanity was not only anointed, but filled from his conception. He was an holy thing, radically filled with the perfections of grace and wisdom, inasmuch as the *Father gave him not the Spirit by measure*, John iii. 34. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory,——full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. His fulness and furniture for our use is wonderfully asserted and set forth to us, *Col.* i. 19. and ii. 9. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* And in him dwells all the *fulness of the Godhead* bodily; that is, in his person God-man. But his human nature, as subsisting in his divine person, hath all that perfection and fulness of grace communicated to it, which our created nature, thus subsisting in the eternal Son of God, is capable of. And *out of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.* The pipe or conduit of his humanity being inseparably united to the infinite, inexhaustible fountain of the Deity, who can look into the depth thereof? This fulness of Christ's human nature, or this human nature of Christ in its fulness, is the object of faith only, but of no imaginary idea.

7. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, as the invisible God is to be seen in the *properties* of it, as they are recorded and asserted in the word. I speak not here of his moral properties belonging to his whole person, by which he might be denominate a *holy man*, a *harmless man*, a *wise man*, a *righteous man*, a *merciful man*; in which, and other such respects, he was the image of the invisible God, fully representing to us the moral perfections of God, and wherein also he is the object of faith, not of any imaginary idea: But I speak even of the properties of his human nature as such. And these properties may be viewed two ways; either as properties that belonged to his human nature during his life-time on earth, and before his resurrection, or these that belonged to it after the same.

(1.) There are properties that belonged to it, while he lived on earth, and before his resurrection; and these are either essential or accidental. These that are *essential* to his human nature, and always permanent, are such as these: His being

a *true man*, having a true body and a reasonable soul; a *perfect man*, having the whole human nature soul and body unite. Again, these properties that are *accidental* or adventitious, occasioned by his circumstances, as *Surety* in a humbled state, and which therefore were not to remain, are these, by which he might be denominated a *poor man*, in a mean condition; a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs*, and of the same infirmities with us, except sinful; a *tempted man*; a *wounded man*; a man that was *circumcised* when a *child*; a man that had his *head crowned with thorns*, and his *hands*, and *feet*, and *side pierced*; a *mortal man*; and, for a time, what we use to call a *dead man*, soul and body being separate; and thereafter a *buried man*: Where the denomination of the person is taken from the body, by an usual figure, a synecdoche, of the part for the whole. Now, most of these properties, considered *materially*, were the objects of sense then, and are the objects of imagination now; and so not properly the objects of faith: But, *formally* considered, as *truths* and propositions laid before us in the word of faith, they are the proper objects of faith; but not at all of sense or imagination: For none can form in his mind the image of a proposition, or of any of these things that are called *credenda*, things to be believed. It is absurd and ridiculous to suppose, that any *subject* whatsoever can be the proper object of faith, or a thing that can be believed, without supposing some *predicate*, or some thing asserted concerning that subject. Now, that assertion only is the proper object of faith, or unbelief, or is believed either to be true or false, according as it hath or wants a proof or testimony for confirming that it is a truth. Therefore I said, in entering upon this particular, that the human nature of Christ is the object of faith in all the properties of it, as they are recorded and asserted in the word. Now, this record, assertion, or relation is a spiritual thing, having no corporeal form: And the testimony of the invisible God confirming it, as with a *Thus saith the Lord*, is also a spiritual and invisible thing; and so is the object only of faith: Which stands allenarly upon the divine testimony; without which these things are not among the number of things to be believed, nor any part of them, but only things to be seen or imagined; that is, objects of sense and fancy, but not of faith. Neither do these properties mentioned, their being the objects of sense and fancy, help to make them the objects of faith: For though the believing soul cannot act in this present state without bodily senses, yet corporeal powers can view them no

no otherwise than as corporeal things abstractly, and thus as objects neither of faith nor unbelief: But, as they are the objects of faith, or truths to be believed upon a divine testimony, they are spiritual and invisible things. And, as they are things not seen, they are the proper objects only of that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. and *which looks not to the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen*, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

(2.) There are properties of the human nature of Christ that belong to it after his resurrection, and now in his glorified state. "Each nature of Christ [says Dr. *Owen* on *the* "*person of Christ*, *p.* 160.] doth preserve its own natural, "essential properties entirely unto and in itself, without "mixture, without composition or confusion, without such "a real communication of the one unto the other, so as that "the one should become the subject of the *properties* of the "other. The Deity in the abstract is not made the humani- "nity, nor on the contrary, *&c.*" And the same author, on *the Spirit*, *p.* 130, says, "The human nature therefore, how- "ever inconceivably advanced, is not the subject of infinite "essentially divine properties." Yet how far these are above the sphere of natural sense and imagination, may appear from the consideration of the properties even of Christ's *human body* now glorified, which were not the properties of it before his resurrection. How glorious must the human body of Christ be, when it is to be considered now as a *spiritual* and *immortal body!* The spirituality of it can be no less, however more it be, than that which will take place in the bodies of the saints after their resurrection, spoken of 1 *Cor.* xv. 44. *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*, in respect of qualities, not in respect of substance. And *vers.* 53. *This mortal must put on immortality*. Of these glorious qualities of Christ's human body, I suppose the Apostle speaks, *Phil.* iii. 20, 21. *Our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*. Dr. *Owen*, on the *glory of Christ*, *p.* 92, 93. writes thus: "That very nature itself which he took on him in this "world, is exalted unto glory. Some, under a pretence of "great subtlety and accuracy, do deny that he hath either "flesh or blood in heaven; that is, as to the substance of "them; however you may suppose that they are changed, "purified, glorified. The great foundation of the church "and all gospel-faith is, that he was *made flesh*, that he did "partake of flesh and blood, even as did the children. That

" he hath forſaken that *fleſh* and *blood* which he was *made* " in the womb of the Bleſſed Virgin, wherein he lived and " died, which he offered unto God in ſacrifice, and wherein " he roſe from the dead, is a *Socinian* fiction. What is the " true nature of the glorification of the *humanity* of Chriſt, " neither thoſe who thus ſurmiſe, nor we can perfectly com- " prehend. It doth not yet appear what we ourſelves ſhall " be; much leſs is it evident unto us, what he is, whom we " ſhall be like. But that he is ſtill in the ſame *human na-* " *ture*, wherein he was on the earth, that he hath the ſame " rational ſoul, and the ſame body, is a fundamental article " of the Chriſtian faith. [It is the object of faith, not of " ſenſe or imagination: For] This nature of the man Chriſt " Jeſus is filled with all the divine graces and perfections " whereof a limited created nature is capable. It is not " deified; it is not made a god; it doth not in heaven coa- " leſce into one nature with the divine by a compoſition " of them. It hath not any eſſential property of the Deity " communicated unto it, ſo as ſubjectively to reſide in it; " it is not made *omniſcient*, *omnipreſent*, *omnipotent*: But it " is exalted in a fulneſs of all divine perfection ineffably a- " bove the glory of angels and men. It is incomprehenſibly " nearer God than they all; hath communications from God, " in glorious light, love and power, ineffably above them " all. But it is ſtill a creature." Of the ſpirituality, glory and immortality of Chriſt's human body now in heaven *Charnock* writes at large, *Vol.* II. *p.* 1093. 1094. Now, theſe properties of Chriſt's glorified body in heaven cannot poſſibly be the object of any imaginary idea; becauſe it can form no image of ſpirituality and immortality. Theſe properties, then, can only be the object of faith looking to theſe inviſible things in the glaſs of divine revelation, ſuch as that *Rev.* i. 18. wherein our Lord Jeſus proclaims from heaven the immortality of his human body, that was once mortal and dead, ſaying, *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* Whence I alſo here notice, that none of theſe properties of Chriſt's human nature that I have mentioned, can be the object of faith conſidered ſeparate from his divine nature and perſon. Though the denomination of the perſon ſhould be taken from any one of theſe properties; by an uſual metonymy, ſuppoſe from the loweſt of them, namely, his being once a *dead man*; yet it is the *perſon* denominated by that property, which faith muſt and will have in view; though a *perſon* that could never die, yet it is the

perſon

person that says, I *was dead*. And therefore, whatever property of Christ's human nature be considered, whether as once *mortal*, then *dead*, and now *alive* and *immortal*; yet such was the inseparable hypostatical union of that nature with his divine person, that these properties of his human nature were and are to be predicate of the person; and cannot be the object of faith, but as they are related to the person of Christ, as well as related or recorded in the word of faith concerning him. These relations make them, the formal object of faith. This faith sees, that though it was only the human nature of Christ that could once be *mortal* and *dead*, and now *alive*; yet it sees, who was the person that was the mortal man. Christ says, *I am he*. Who was the dead man? Christ says, *I was dead*. No saving virtue, profit or advantage flows from these properties unto us, but as they are considered and viewed in their relation to his divine person, thus: That the *mortal man* was the *immortal* God; the *dying* and *dead man* was the *living* and *true God*; the man that is now alive, and lives for evermore, is the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*, vers. 8. even the eternal Son of God in our nature. The human nature of Christ, then, is the object of faith as the invisible God is to be seen in these properties of his human nature viewed in their relation to his divine person: Which relative consideration thereof, though the only saving and profitable consideration, yet is infinitely remote from being the object of any imaginary idea. To the same purpose,

8. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith in the *actions* and *passions*, the *doing* and *suffering* thereof, in as far as the invisible God is to be seen therein and thereby; while faith views them as the actions and passions of the person God-man. Here what was just now said relating to the properties of his human nature, is applicable to the actions thereof. The actions of either or both natures are the actions of the same one person. Even as sometimes the properties of the one nature are ascribed to the whole person denominated from that nature to which they belong; so, when the Word is said to have been *with God*, and to *be God*, John i. 1, 2. *&c.* and when Christ is said to have *eaten, slept, wept, &c.* and sometimes the properties and works of one nature are ascribed to the whole person, denominated from the other nature, as, when we are told the Son of God was *made of a woman*; *God purchased his church with his own blood*, &c. That the *Son of man* is *in heaven*, which Christ says while

yet his human nature was *on earth*, John iii. 13. *The manhood could not have acted at all, if the λόγος in which the human nature ſubſiſted, had been, or could have been quieſcent. Neither could the actions of the man Jeſus been the actions of our Redeemer*†. From the union of the two diſtinct natures in one individual perſon it is, that the actions of each nature are the actions of the ſame one perſon. Thus it was the perſon of God-man who fulfilled all righteouſneſs, preached, wrought miracles, ſuffered, died. His divine nature did not, could not ſuffer and die: But the ſame perſon who was both God and man, did both ſuffer and die‡. God purchaſed the church with his own blood; not with the blood of another, but his own. Hence the merit of his obedience; hence the value of his ſufferings. And to ſpeak of the doing, ſuffering and death of Chriſt as man, or in his human nature, as if they were not to be conſidered as the dying, ſuffering and death of the perſon God-man, is to weaken and undermine our redemption by him, and deſtroy the merit and value of his obedience and ſatisfaction. Now, that which is perceptible by every man's fancy relating to this myſtery, namely, the action and paſſion of a man, is no part, no γρὺ, no grain of the proper object of ſaving faith: For the imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, or in his human nature, doing, ſuffering and dying, can include nothing of the myſtery, merit or value of the active and paſſive obedience of the perſon God-man, in our room. This is the formal object of faith; and, as ſuch, cannot be the object of carnal ſenſe and imagination. In the goſpel-glaſs the eye of faith only ſees the inviſible God doing and dying in our nature, ſuffering, and ſatisfying his own juſtice in our room and ſtead, as our Mediator and Surety.

9. The human nature of Chriſt is the object of faith, in ſo far as the inviſible God is to be ſeen in all the *ſteps* of its *exaltation*: For theſe can be no otherwiſe ſeen but in the glorious perſon of the Son of God, in whom that human nature is exalted: And conſequently it can be ſeen by no imaginary idea, but only by faith. Thus, when Chriſt's dead body was

† *The Aſſembly's Shorter Catechiſm reſcued, p.* 29.

‡ *Maccov. diſtinct. p.* 109. Communicatio proprietatum alia eſt realis, alia verbalis. Realis eſt in concreto; verbalis in abſtracto. Hoc eſt, quod tribuitur naturæ alterutri; hoc tribuitur toti perſonæ in concreto *realiter*; at verò, ratione naturæ à qua denominatur concretum, tantummodo *verbaliter*. Verbi gratiâ, Cum Deus dicitur proprio ſanguine redemiſſe eccleſiam, de perſona Chriſti hoc dicitur in concreto *realiter*; at verò *verbaliter* de natura a qua perſona denominatur.

was raised out of the grave, or when the man Christ arose from the dead, it was the person God-man rising, and *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 4. When the human nature of Christ ascended to heaven, it was *God going up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*, Psal. xlvii. 5. God in our nature *ascending on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men*, Psal. lxviii. 18. When the man Christ sat down at the right hand of God, it was the Son of God in our nature *sitting down at the Father's right hand*, according to *Psal.* cx. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.* And when the man Christ will come to judge the world, it will be the person God-man: For *God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained*, Acts xvii. 31. and, *God will be judge himself*, Psal. l. 6. The human nature of Christ then, in all these degrees of its exaltation, is the object of faith only, not of any imaginary idea; because in every one of them the invisible God is to be seen; and none of them are seen by faith, if the invisible God be not seen therein and thereby: For here every act of faith is a *seeing him that is invisible.* In short, none of these appearances of Christ, from his incarnation, or being born, to his exaltation unto heaven, which are, I may say, the foot and the top of the ladder that reaches between earth and heaven, nor any of the interveening steps or rounds between these two, as the doing, dying, rising of Christ; none of them all can be seen to any profit or advantage by fancy or imagination, or as they are human actions discernible in a natural way; but only as they are seen by faith to be the appearances of the great God, in our nature, and in our room. On which subject a Christian poet sings very sweetly in the following words.

Ille Deus rerum cœli terræque Creator,
Me propter sacrâ virgine natus homo est.——
Me gessit moriens; me, victâ morte, resurgens,
Et secum ad Patrem me super astra tulit. PROSPER.

10. The human nature of Christ is the object of faith, in so far as the invisible God is to be seen in all these profitable *ends* and *purposes* for which the Son of God was clothed with our nature. Many of these blessed ends might here be enumerated; such as, (1.) That he assumed our nature, to assure us that this human nature of ours, though death and a thousand changes should pass upon it, cannot be utterly lost; for it subsists for ever in Christ. And came he down to dwell in it alone, as he would do at last, if we did not subsist in death,

death, and after death? The Lord of life, and he who is life itself, would never dwell or unite with death, but with a design *to swallow up death in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54. Surely, (2.) His wonderful condescension in assuming our nature into his eternal and unchangeable personality, is not to be confined, in its end and design, to the few short and troublesome days we have in this life. Certainly it is to reach to the utmost bounds of eternity, even as long as the union between the two natures subsists in him, who hath an *unchangeable priesthood, because he continueth for ever*, Heb. vii. 24. The efficacy then of this mysterious union must comprehend in it a glorious resurrection of the body, and an immortal happy life to the soul; and so to our human nature, soul and body reunited. (3.) He assumed our nature for this end, that all his seed, vitally unite to him by faith, may have a sure pledge of a happy life and subsistence for ever, being related to him who abides for ever, and sib to him who hath been of old, and is from everlasting to everlasting God; who hath taken on him our flesh, that we might receive his Spirit; which is a *well of water* in the soul, that, though death is in the way, runs higher and higher, till it empty itself in *eternal life*, John iv. 14. (4.) He assumed our nature for this end, to give proof and evidence of his good-will to the children of men, and that, living or dying, we might always have to do with God in our nature, an incarnate God. But I confine myself to these ends and purposes which Mr. *Robe* himself quotes, *p.* 56. namely, these mentioned in our Larger Catechism; where it is said, 'It was requisite that the Mediator 'should be man, that he might advance our nature, *Heb.* ii. '16. perform obedience to the law, *Gal.* iv. 4. suffer and make 'intercession for us in our nature, *Heb.* ii. 14. *&c.* have 'a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, *Heb.* iv. 15. that we might 'receive the adoption of sons, *Gal.* iv. 5. and have comfort 'and access with boldness unto the throne of grace, *Heb.* iv. '16.' In all these profitable ends for which Christ assumed our nature it is the object of faith only. And hence the imaginary idea, that respects and reaches only to corporeal things, is the most useless and unprofitable thing that ever was brought in to have any concern about objects of faith: For it is impossible to form in the head an image of any one of these blessed and profitable ends for which it was requisite that the Mediator should be man; for they are all *spiritual ends*, and *spiritual things*, that cannot be seen but with *spiritual eyes*. Natural senses and imagination can look no farther here, than flesh or mere humanity: Which is but a *knowing Christ after*

ter the flesh, by forming a mental image of it; which none will believe to be profitable for *any good end*, who believe what Christ himself hath said, That *the flesh profiteth nothing*, and that *his words are spirit and life*. Hence, if we see not divinity in Christ, we see nothing profitable. To view Christ as man, or in his humanity simply, is most unprofitable, vain, yea and sinful. We may think of any other man as a man without sin. But to think of Christ as man in the same manner we think of any other man, is unlawful and sinful; because he is God, and ought to be as much honoured as God the Father, *John* v. 23. *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.* To think of him as man by an imaginary idea, or to know him in that respect, is, as I have shewed, no part of rational knowledge in itself, and cannot give Christ the honour even of his manhood, but merely thinks of a human body. But, suppose one have the rational knowledge of his human nature, or of him as man, he does no honour to Christ, unless by faith he give him the same honour as God that he gives the Father. And though as Mediator the Father is greater than he, who in that station is God's servant in our nature, even *the man* that is *God's fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7. and *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. yet hence true faith honours Christ in his *divinity*; particularly, (1.) In the divinity of his *person*, while it *beholds his glory as the only begotten of the Father*, John i. 14. (2.) In the divinity of his *office*, while it sees him to be the Sent of God; the sealed of God; the Christ of God, anointed to such a work as none could execute but he who is God, *John* vi. 69. (3.) In the divinity of his *doing*, or active obedience, in *fulfilling all righteousness, bringing in everlasting righteousness*; called therefore, *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*, Jer. xxiii. 6. and *the righteousness of God*, Rom. i. 17. (4.) In the divinity of his *sufferings*, death and blood, as not only satisfying to God's infinite justice for man's sins, *Eph.* v. 2. but also meritorious of all grace, and making the purchase of eternal life, *Eph.* i. 14. (5.) In the divinity of his *resurrection* and *ascension*, as I have shewed above; and consequently in the divinity of his strength and ability *to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, because he ever liveth to make intercession*, Heb. vii. 25. I may add, (6.) The divinity of his *humanity*; as *Augustine* speaks of his human divinity, and divine humanity, because of the personal union of the divine and human natures of our Immanuel, God-man; so as

faith

faith cannot view them ſeparately. I might ſpeak of the divinity of his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words and works. Not one of them all can be the object of an imaginary idea; becauſe it cannot ſee inviſible divinity in any of them. An imaginary idea, for example, of his *blood*, is an idle vain imagination; becauſe it cannot view the divinity thereof, as being *the blood of God*, Acts xx. 28.

Thus I have ſhewed in what reſpects the human nature of Chriſt is the object of faith only, ſo as it cannot be the object of an imaginary idea, nor perceptible by any man's fancy.

CHAP. VII.

I Propoſed *next* to adduce the ſentiments of divines in oppoſition to this doctrine of mental imagery, or imaginary ideas of Chriſt as man. Though I know none that ever directly treated on this ſubject, and I know not if ever any had occaſion to do ſo till now, that ſuch ſtrange doctrine is introduced and intermixed with divinity; yet there are many inſtances of incidental diſcourſes, (beſides what I have already given,) or occaſional teſtimonies in the writings of divines, againſt all imagery, internal as well as external, in religion. Some of the inſtances ſuitable, I think, to the preſent ſubject, are theſe following; to which I may add alſo the ſentiment of philoſophers; and therefore ſhall divide this chapter into two *ſections*, one treating this matter as a point of *divinity*, the other as a point of *philoſophy*.

SECT. I.

I BEGIN with the mind of *divines* upon this ſubject. Dr. *Owen*, on the *Spirit*, p. 151. ſays, 'The *utter neglect* of learning the knowledge of Chriſt, and of the truth as it is in him, 'is not more pernicious unto the ſouls of men, than is the 'learning of it by *undue means*, whereby *falſe* and *miſchievous ideas* or repreſentations of him are infuſed into the minds 'of men. The Papiſts would learn and teach him by *images*, the work of mens hands, and teachers of lies.—They are 'in themſelves ſuited only to ingenerate low and carnal 'thoughts in depraved ſuperſtitious minds.—The apprehenſions which they can have hereby, tend but to the *knowing Chriſt after the fleſh*; which the Apoſtle looked on as no part 'of his duty, 2 *Cor.* v. 16. But the glory of the human nature, 'as united unto the perſon of the Son of God, and engaged

'in

'in the discharge of his office of Mediator, consists alone in 'these eminent peculiar ineffable communications of the Spi- 'rit of God unto him, and his powerful operations in him. 'This is represented to us in the glass of the gospel; which 'we beholding by faith, *are changed into the same image*, by 'the *same Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

How far the human nature of Christ, as it is the proper object of faith, transcends mere natural reason and understanding, and far more all imaginary ideas, is lively expressed, and further explained by the same author, on the *person of Christ*, *p.* 14. where he hath these words: 'The preven- 'tion of that nature from any subsistence of its own, by its 'assumption into personal union with the Son of God in the 'first instance of its conception, is that which is above all 'miracles, nor can be designed by that name. A mystery 'it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential 'operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that 'are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the pro- 'perties of the divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wis- 'dom, grace, and condescension. All other things were produ- 'ced and effected by an outward emanation of power from 'God: *He said, Let there be light, and there was light.* But this 'assumption of our nature into a hypostatical union with the 'Son of God, this constitution of one and the same indivi- 'dual person in two natures, so infinitely distinct, as those 'of God and man, whereby the Eternal was made in time, 'the Infinite became finite, the Immortal, mortal, yet con- 'tinuing eternal, infinite, immortal, is that singular expressi- 'on of divine wisdom, goodness, and power, wherein God 'will be admired and glorified unto all eternity,' *&c. Pag.* 15. 'In the expression of this mystery, the scripture doth sometimes 'draw the vail over it, as that which we cannot look into.—— 'This glorious *Word*, which is God, and is described by his 'eternity, and omnipotency in works of creation and pro- 'vidence, *was made flesh*; which expresseth the lowest state 'and condition of human *nature. Without controversy great 'is this mystery of godliness.* And, in that state wherein he 'visibly appeared as *so* made *flesh*, those who had eyes given 'them from above, saw his *glory*, *the glory as of the only 'begotten of the Father.* The eternal *Word* being made flesh 'and manifested therein, they saw *his glory.*' *Pag.* 17. 'The 'faith of this mystery ennobles the mind wherein it is, render- 'ing it spiritual and heavenly, transforming it into the i- 'mage of God. Herein consists the excellency of faith, a-

'bove all other powers and acts of the soul, that it receives, assents unto, and rests in things in their own nature absolutely incomprehensible. It is ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, *Heb.* xi. 1. *The evidence of things not seen*; that which makes evident, as by demonstration, these things which are no way objected unto sense, and which reason cannot comprehend. The more sublime and glorious, the more inaccessible unto sense and reason are the things which we believe, the more are we changed into the image of God, in the exercise of faith upon them.' *Pag.* 18. 'This glory which we behold, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. is the glory of the face of God in Christ, or the glorious representation which is made of him in the person of Christ. The glass wherein this glory is represented unto us, proposed unto our view and contemplation, is divine revelation in the gospel. Herein we behold it alone, by faith alone.' *Pag.* 31. 'In all the revelations that ever God made of himself, his mind and will, he always laid this practice of *making representations of him* under the most severe interdict and prohibition. And this he did, ——because nothing that can fall into the invention and imagination of man, could make any other but *false representations* of him, and so substitute an *idol* in his place.' *Pag.* 103. 'Many there are who, not comprehending, nor being affected with that divine spiritual description of the person of Christ which is given us by the Holy Ghost in scripture, do feign unto themselves false representations of him by images and pictures, so to excite carnal and corrupt affections in their minds. By the help of their outward senses, they reflect on their imaginations the shape of a human body, cast into postures and circumstances dolorous or triumphant; and so, by the working of their fancy, raise a *commotion* of mind in themselves, which they suppose to be love unto Christ. But all these idols are *teachers of lies.* The true beauty and amiableness of the person of Christ, which is the formal object and cause of divine love, is so far from being represented herein, as that the mind is thereby *wholly diverted* from the contemplation of it: *For no more can be so pictured unto us, but what may belong unto a mere man, and what is arbitrarily referred unto Christ, not by faith, but by corrupt imagination. The beauty of the person of Christ as represented in the scripture, consists in things invisible unto the eyes of flesh. They are such as no hand of man can represent or shadow. It is the eye of faith alone that can see this King in his beauty.* What else can contemplate on the uncreated glories of his *divine* 'nature?

nature? Can the hand of man represent the union of his 'natures in the same person, wherein he is peculiarly amiable? 'What eye can discern the mutual communication of the properties of his different natures in the same person which depends thereon, whence it is that God laid down his life for 'us, and purchased his church with his own blood? In these 'things, O vain man! doth the loveliness of the person of Christ 'unto the souls of believers consist; and not in those strokes of 'art which fancy hath guided a skilful hand and pencil unto. 'And what eye of flesh can discern the inhabitation of the Spirit 'in all fulness in the *human nature?* Can his condescension, his 'love, his grace, his power, his compassion, his offices, his fitness and ability to save sinners, be decyphered on a tablet, or 'engraven on wood or stone? However such pictures may 'be adorned, however beautified and enriched, they are not 'that Christ which the soul of the spouse doth love; they 'are not any means of representing his love unto us, or of conveying our love unto him. They only divert the minds of 'superstitious persons from the Son of God, unto the embraces of *a cloud composed of fancy and imagination.*' *Pag.* 62. 'The person of Christ is the object of divine worship 'and honour. The formal object and reason hereof is the 'divine nature, and its essential infinite excellency.—Those 'who denying that nature in him, do yet pretend to wor'ship him with divine and religious adoration, *do but worship a golden calf of their own setting up: For a Christ who 'is not over all God blessed for ever, is not better.* And it 'implies a contradiction, that any creature should, on any account, be the immediate proper object of divine worship, unless the divine essential excellencies be communicated unto it, or transfused into it; whereby it would cease 'to be a creature.'

The same author, on the *glory of Christ*, *p.* (*mihi*) 42. says, 'The eternal fire of the divine nature dwells in the bush 'of our frail nature, yet is not consumed thereby. God 'dwells in this bush. And, by the direction given unto *Moses* 'to put off his shoes, we are taught to cast away all *fleshly imaginations* and carnal affections, that by pure acts of 'faith we may behold this glory.' *Pag.* 46. 'To behold 'it, is not a work of fancy or imagination. It is not conversing with an image framed by the art of man *without*, or that 'of our own fancy *within*, but of faith exercised on divine revelation.' *Pag.* 49. 'The scripture is the only glass wherein 'we may behold the glory of Christ. This is the glory of the scripture, that it is the great, yea the only outward means of re-

'presenting unto us the glory of Christ.' *P.* 94, 95. 'This is 'that glory whereof we ought to endeavour a prospect by 'faith; *by faith*, I say, *not by imagination.* Vain and 'foolish men, having general notions of this glory of Christ, 'knowing nothing of the real nature of it, have endeavoured 'to represent it in pictures and images, with all that lustre 'and beauty which the art of painting with ornaments of 'gold and jewels can give them. This is that representation 'of the present glory of christ, which, being made and 'proposed unto the imaginations and carnal affections of 'superstitious persons, carries such a shew of devotion and 'veneration in the *Papal* church. But they err, not know-'ing the scriptures, nor the eternal glory of the Son of God. 'The glory that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the real, actual 'possession of in heaven, can be no otherwise seen or ap-'prehended in this world, but in the light of faith, fixing 'it self on divine revelation. *To behold this glory of Christ, 'is not an act of fancy or imagination. It does not consist 'in fancying to ourselves the shape of a glorious person in hea-'ven. But the steady exercise of faith on the revelation and 'description made of this glory of Christ in the scripture,* is 'the grand rule and measure of all divine meditations there-'on.——Every pretence of a desire of heaven, and of the 'presence of Christ therein, that does not arise from, that 'is not resolved into that prospect which we have of the 'glory of Christ in this world by faith, is mere *fancy and 'imagination.*' *P.* 139. 'Faith and sight are the two spiritual 'powers of the soul, the one in this life, the other in that 'which is to come. The object of them both is the glory 'of Christ.' *P.* 141. 'A shadow or image of this glory of 'Christ is drawn in the gospel: And tho' it be obscure and 'imperfect in comparison of his own real substantial glory, 'which is the object of vision in heaven; yet is it the only 'image and representation of himself which he hath left and 'given unto us in this world. That woful cursed invention 'of framing images of him out of stocks and stones, how-'ever adorned, or representations of him by the art of paint-'ing, are so far from representing to the mind of man any 'thing of his real glory, that nothing can be more effectual 'to divert their thoughts and apprehensions from it.' *P.* 147. 'When Christ was transfigured on the mount, and had on 'his human nature some reflexions of his divine glory, his 'disciples that were with him, were rather amazed, than re-'freshed by it, *Matth.* xvii. 4. They saw his glory, but spoke 'thereon they knew not what, *Luke* ix. 30, 33. And the

'reason

'reason hereof was, because no man in this life can have 'a visive power, either spiritual or corporeal, directly and 'immediately to behold the real glory of Christ. Should the 'Lord Jesus appear now to any of us in his majesty and 'glory, it would not be unto our edification and consola-'tion; for we are not meet nor able, by the power of any 'light or grace that we have received or can receive, to 'bear the immediate appearance and representation of them.' *P.* 148.' Those who dream of his personal reign on earth 'before the day of judgment, unless they suppose that all 'the saints shall be perfectly glorified also, (which is only 'to bring down heaven to earth for a while to no purpose,) 'provide not at all for the edification and consolation of 'the church. And how much more abominable is the folly 'of men, who would represent the Lord Christ in his pre-'sent glory by pictures and images of him? When they 'have done their utmost with their burnishing glasses and 'gildings, an eye of *flesh* can not only behold it, but, if it 'be guided by *reason*, see it contemptible and foolish. But 'the true glory of Christ neither inward nor outward sight 'can bear the rays of in this life. The dispensation which 'we are meet for, is only that of his presence with us by 'his Spirit: *We know him now no more after the flesh.* We 'are advanced above that way and means of the knowledge 'of him by the flesh, carnal ordinances of the Old Testa-'ment, *&c.* Therefore he tells his disciples, that it was 'expedient for them, that he should go away, and send the 'Spirit to them, John xvi. 7. Hereon they had a clearer view 'of the glory of Christ, than they could have by beholding 'him in the flesh. This is our spiritual posture and condi-'tion: We are past the knowledge of him according to the 'flesh. We cannot attain nor receive the sight of him 'in glory; but the life that we now lead, is by the *faith* of the 'Son of God.' *P.* 166, 167, 168, 169. 'This transforming 'effect from the spiritual view of Christ as proposed in the 'gospel, being lost as unto any experience of it in the minds 'of men, carnal, and ignorant of the mystery of believing, '(as it is at present derided, though it be the life of religion,) 'fancy and superstition provided various supplies in the room 'of it: For they found out crucifixes and images with paintings, 'to represent him in his sufferings and glory. By these things 'their carnal affections being excited by their outward senses, 'they suppose themselves to be affected with him, and to be 'like unto him. Yea, some have proceeded so far as, either 'by arts diabolical, or by other means, to make an appear-

'ance

'ance of wounds in their hands and feet and sides; therein 'pretending to be like him, yea to be wholly conformed un-'to his image. *But that which is produced by an image, is 'but an image. An imaginary Christ will effect nothing in 'the minds of men but imaginary grace*, &c. However, there 'is a general supposition granted on all hands, namely, that 'there must be a view of Christ and his glory to cause us to 'love him, and thereby to make us conformable and like un-'to him. But here lies the difference: Those of the church 'of *Rome* say, that this must be done by the beholding of a cru-'cifix, with other images and pictures of him, and that with 'our bodily eyes: We say it is by our beholding his glory by 'faith as revealed in the gospel, and no otherwise. And, 'to confess the truth, we have some who as they reject the 'use of images, so they despise that spiritual view of the glory 'of Christ which we inquire after. Such persons on the first 'occasion will fall on the other side; for any thing is better 'than nothing, *&c.* If an idolater should plead, as they do 'all, that in the beholding of the image of Christ they find 'their affections unto him greatly excited, increased and in-'flamed, (so they will be, *Isa.* lvii. 5. *inflaming themselves with 'idols*;) and that hereupon he endeavours to be like unto 'him; what shall we have to oppose thereunto? for it is cer-'tain, that such images are apt to make impressions on the 'minds of men, partly from the *readiness* of the *senses and 'imagination to give them admittance into their thoughts*, and 'partly from their natural inclinations unto superstition, their 'aversion from things spiritual and invisible, with an inclina-'tion unto things present and visible. Hence, among them 'who are satisfied that they ought not to be adored with any 'religious veneration; yet some are apt, upon the sight of 'them, to entertain a thoughtful reverence, as they would do, 'if they were to enter into a Pagan temple full of idols, *&c.* 'But that they do sensibly affect the minds of men carnal 'and superstitious, cannot be denied; and so they suppose it 'is a love unto Christ himself. However, certain it is in ge-'neral, and confessed on all hands, that the beholding of 'Christ is the most blessed means of exciting all our graces, 'spiritualising all our affections, and transforming our minds 'into his likeness. And, if we have not another and a more 'excellent way of beholding him, than they have who behold 'him, as they suppose, in images and crucifixes, they would 'seem to have the advantage of us: For their minds will be 'really affected with somewhat, ours with nothing at all. And, 'by the pretence thereof, they inveigle the carnal affections

'of

'of men, ignorant of the power of the gospel, to become 'their proselytes: for having lived, it may be, a long time 'without any the least experience of a sensible impression 'on their minds, or the transforming power from the repre- 'sentation of Christ in the gospel; upon their very first de- 'vout religious application to these images they find their 'thoughts exercised, their minds affected, and some present 'change made upon them. But there is a difference between 'the person of *David*, and *an image with a bolster of goats 'hair*; though one were laid in the room and place of the o- 'ther. And there is so between Christ, and an image; though 'the one be put in the place of the other. Neither do these 'things serve unto any other end, but to divert the minds of 'men from faith and love to Christ; giving them some such 'satisfaction in the room of them, as that their carnal affe- 'ctions do cleave unto their idols. And indeed it does belong 'unto the wisdom of faith, and we stand in need of spiritual 'light, to discern and judge between the workings of natu- 'ral affections towards spiritual objects, on undue motives, 'by undue means, with indirect ends, wherein all *Papal* de- 'votions consist; and the spiritual exercise of grace in these 'affections duly fixed on spiritual objects. But, as was said, 'it is a real experience of the efficacy that there is in the spi- 'ritual beholding of the glory of Christ by faith, as proposed 'in the gospel, to strengthen, increase and excite all grace 'unto its proper exercise, as changing and conforming the 'soul gradually into his likeness, which must secure us against 'all these pretences.' *P.* 179. 'Where light leaves the affe- 'ctions behind, it ends in formality or Atheism; and where 'affections outrun light, they sink into the bog of superstition, 'doting on images, pictures, or the like.' *P.* 190. 'We have 'no proposal of the glory of Christ unto us by vision, or il- 'lustrious appearances of his person, as *Isaiah* had of old, '*chap.* vi. 1, 2, 3, 4. or as *John* had in the *Revelation, chap.* i. '*vers.* 13, 14, 15, 16. We need it not; it would be of no advan- 'tage to us: For, as to the assurance of faith, we have a word 'of prophecy more useful to us than a voice from heaven, '2 *Pet.* i. 17, 18, 19, *&c.* And as we have no such external 'proposals of his glory unto us in visions, so neither have we 'any new revelation of him by immediate inspiration. We 'can see nothing of it, know nothing of it, but what is pro- 'posed unto us in scripture; and that as it is proposed, *&c.*' *P.* 192. 'Some suppose, that by chopping, gilding and paint- 'ing they can make any image of Christ that shall perfectly 'represent him to their senses and carnal affections from

'head

'head to foot. But they feed on ashes, and have a lie in their 'right hand. Jesus Christ is evidently crucified before our 'eyes in the scripture, *Gal.* iii. 1. so also is he evidently exalted and glorified therein. And it is the wisdom of faith, to 'gather into one these parcelled descriptions that are given 'of him, that they may be the object of its view and contemplation.'

Somewhat similar to the passages above, are the words of *Burgess* in his *Spiritual Refinings, p.* 279. shewing how much to be suspected that religion is that affects the senses and imaginations, and touches the affections, without duly enlightening the mind. 'What can be thought the reason [says 'he] of so many apostates from the hopeful beginnings of 'grace which seemed in many, but this: Only their affections were wrought upon; they had great grief, great fear 'and terror upon their consciences, but little or very weak 'workings upon their judgments. Therefore we Ministers 'of God think not this any such great matter to stir up in 'you new griefs, new sorrows, new fears. Alas! this water will soon be dried up. —— Fear all these affections of 'grief, and sorrow, and terror that are in thee; being but affections, and not the fruit of an enlightened judgment, will 'quickly vanish away: And as rotten fruit falls to the ground 'before it is ripe, so will all these affections decay, before 'they come to any maturity, that flow not from a sanctified understanding. Divines say, God begins orderly; he 'first works in the understanding, and by that moves and 'excites the affections: But the devil, he first moves the affections, and by them he perverteth and corrupteth the understanding. Thus he propounded to *Eve* what was good 'to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, thereby to ensnare the 'affections; and by that means blinded her judgment. Therefore the Apostle commands *Timothy* to *reprove with all 'doctrine*, 2 Tim. iv. 2. To make men afraid and tremble 'about sin, when by good and sound doctrine they are not 'informed of the foulness and guilt of it, will never hold.'

To this purpose are the words of *Tertullian advers. Valentinum*, cited by *Davenant in Col. p.* 222. *Habent artificium impostores, quo prius persuadeant quàm edoceant: veritas autem docendo persuadet, non suadendo docet*: i. e. *The artifice of deceivers or impostors is, to persuade before they teach: But truth teaches not by persuading, but persuades by teaching.* These two last citations deserve to be considered with relation to the effects of that doctrine that mostly strikes the imaginations, tickles the

the fancy, stirs the affections or moves the passions, yet, leaves the mind and judgment under clouds of darkness and ignorance. But I return to passages of the former sort,

Ridgley in his *Body of divinity, vol.* II. *p.* 257. says, 'It 'is farther inquired, Whether we may not describe our Saviour, as he sometimes is by the *Papists*, in those things 'that respect his human nature? —— To this we answer, 'That whatever of Christ comes within the reach of the art 'of man to delineate or describe, is only his human nature; 'which is not the object of divine adoration: And therefore 'this rather tends to debase, than give us raised and becoming conceptions of him as such.' *Vol.* I. *p.* 394. 'Had 'it [the human nature of Christ] been first formed, and then 'united to the divine nature, it would have had a proper subsistence of its own; but, since it was not, its personality 'considered as united to the second Person of the God-head, 'is contained therein, tho' its properties are infinitely distinct from it.' *Pag.* 406. 'If the nature that obeyed and 'suffered had been a human person, his obedience and sufferings could not have been of infinite value, or accepted by 'God as a sufficient price of redemption; for they could not 'have had this value reflected on them, had they not been 'the works of a divine person. And those rays of divine glory 'that shined forth in his human nature, could have no immediate relation to it, had it been a distinct person from that 'of his Godhead.

'It is farther observed, that those works which were performed by him in each nature, are to be relied on by us 'as the works of the whole person. This reliance contains 'in it an instance of adoration; and supposes the person who performs them to be God; which he was not in his human 'nature. Therefore we are to adore our Mediator, and rely on the works performed by him in his human nature, as 'he is God and man in one person. As we have sufficient 'ground from scripture to conclude, that the Mediator is the 'object of divine adoration; so we are to depend on him as 'a divine person for salvation: And our worship herein does 'not terminate on his human nature, but on his Deity.' *Pag.* 131. 'And indeed his divine personality is the only foun'dation of his right to be adored.' How opposite to all these expressions is the doctrine of the necessity and helpfulness of imaginary ideas, respecting Christ's human nature as a corporeal object, and yet an object of faith?

Dr. *Owen*, on *Communion with each Person*, p. 230. says, 'By the grace of his person, 'I understand not the outward

'appearance of his human nature, neither when he conver-
'sed here on earth, bearing our infirmities;—concerning
'which some of the ancients were very poetical in their ex-
'pressions; nor yet as now exalted in glory; a vain imagi-
'nation whereof makes many bear a false, a corrupted respect
'unto Christ, even upon carnal apprehensions of the mighty
'exaltation of the human nature; which is but to *know Christ*
'*after the flesh*, 2 Cor. v. 19. A mischief much improved
'by the abomination of foolish imagery.'

To this purpose we may see the mind of the divines, the authors of the *Morning Exercises, vol.* III. *p.* 423, 424. 'The
'schoolmen have concluded, [to which I find our learned
'and pious divines † have given their assent,] That the essence
'of the Godhead is the primary and proper object of wor-
'ship. This divine essence is wholly in Christ, *Col.* ii. 9.
'*In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*——
'And as God manifested to them (that were under the law)
'in the temple, so God manifested to us in Christ, is the
'proper object of worship to us. The flesh or humanity of
'Christ is the *medium* or mean by which we have access to
'God in all our worship. This is expressed *Heb.* x. 19, 20.
'*Having boldness by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way*
'*which he hath consecrated for us through the vail; that is,*
'*to say, his flesh.* By the flesh of Christ here, I do not un-
'derstand his *natural flesh* barely considered, as such, but
'in that notion, as it is to be understood *John* vi. 53, 54, 55,
'56. where Christ speaks of eating his flesh and drinking his
'blood unto life. Where Christ's flesh (by a *metonymy* of
'the cause for the effect) signifies the righteousness, satisfac-
'tion, reconciliation, grace, peace, glory Christ procured
'for us, by the obedience he performed to God in that flesh.
'By the flesh of Christ in this sense we have access to God
'in all our worship. Yet is not the consideration of Christ's
'natural flesh altogether useless unto this end? For whereas
'we are apt to frame images and similitudes of God in our
'minds, the *right apprehensions of God dwelling in the human*
'*nature of Christ,* (who is the true image of the invisible
'God,) may be effectual to remove all other images and
'likenesses of God out of our minds. But then we must be
'careful, that we do not terminate our conceptions of God
'in the *man* Christ, or in the *manhood* of Christ; for then
'we shall make the human nature of Christ the image of the
'Godhead; and that would be an *idol.* But, when we have
'taken up an apprehension of the humanity of Christ, if
'our

† Dr. *Owen* on *communion with the Holy Ghost, chap.* 8. *p.* 406.

' our conceptions pass through the vail into the holiest, if ' we are led thereby to worship that Godhead that dwells in ' it, this is a right conception and true worship.'

The passage in Dr. *Owen* cited in that above one, is in these words: ' It is, and that not without ground, denied by the ' schoolmen, that the formal reason and object of divine wor- ' ship is in the persons precisely considered; that is, under the ' formally constitutive reason of their personality, which is their ' relation to each other: But this belongs to the divine nature ' and essence, and to their distinct persons, as they are i- ' dentified with the essence itself. Hence is that way of pray- ' ing to the Trinity, by the repetition of the same petition to ' the several persons, as in the *Litany*, groundless, if not im- ' pious. It supposeth, that one person is worshipped, and not ' another, when each person is worshipped as God, and each ' person is so, *&c.* The proper and peculiar object of di- ' vine worship and invocation is, the essence of God, in its ' infinite excellency, dignity, majesty, and its causality, as ' the first sovereign cause of all things. Now, this is com- ' mon to all the three persons, and is proper to each of them, ' not formally, as a person, but as God blessed for ever. All ' adoration respects that which is common to all; so that in ' each act of adoration and worship all are adored and wor- ' shipped.' To this purpose Mr. *John Brown*, on *prayer*, from page 134. says, ' We would beware to conceive of this ' one God and three persons under any shape or idea; be- ' cause he is an object purely spiritual and invisible. — He is ' infinitely above all our thoughts. — We would beware, e- ' ven in our thoughts and imaginations, to divide the object ' of our worship. — Particularly, we would beware to ima- ' gine, that, when we are praying to the Mediator, we are ' only giving to him a peculiar and middle kind of worship, in- ' ferior to that which is due to God, and not the same; for ' then we should necessarily grant, that he were not the true ' and living God, or that his taking on the relation and work ' of a Mediator, did degrade him as to his Deity: Which ' were impious and false. ——— For it is the person we pray ' to; and this person is God. Though in him the human ' nature is inseparably united unto the divine nature; yet the ' human nature doth not subsist of itself, but in the Godhead ' of the Son, to which it is now hypostatically united; so that ' the person is but one, *&c.* Therefore, because Christ who ' is true man is true God, and as to his person is God, we ' would beware, in our worshipping of him, to make any ' precision or abstraction, in our minds, of his human na-

'ture from his divine nature, as if one were to be worshipped, and not the other: For our worship must be directed to the person; and this person is one, and is God. And here we can make no abstraction or precision as to the object worshipped; but must consider Christ as one person, though consisting of two natures. And we must consider this one person as God, because so it is, and the human nature consisteth in and by the Godhead, and not of itself; and therefore maketh no alteration in the person, the object of worship.' Here, by the by, it may be remarked, that, in opposition to this sound doctrine, Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea of Christ as man is in its nature a prescinding and abstracting idea. It can go no farther than the notion of Christ's human body: It cannot so much as conceive of Christ's human nature as such, or as it is an intellectual creature, according to the words of *Augustine* †, as cited at the foot of the page: 'The soul is the image of that whereof it is capable and can be a partaker: But the sensitive power, seeing it knows by a material and sensible organ, is no way ordained for this purpose, that it can possibly know intellectual creatures.' Now, though this seems also to be Mr. *Robe*'s opinion according to his definition of the objects of imaginary ideas; and though it is only by an intellectual idea there can be such a precision and abstraction, as Mr. *Brown* speaks of above, which yet is the very thing he so justly condemns; and though Mr. *Robe*'s prescinding by an imaginary idea seems to be much more condemnable: Yet he even inculcates the necessity of that imaginary precision and abstraction, by making this imaginary idea of Christ as man, the first thing necessary, and then the understanding must go forward, to conceive in another manner: So that the first conception, being without understanding, cannot but prescind from the person and Godhead of Christ. Whereas the doctrine of faith teaches otherwise; and the grace of faith only can take up the glorious person that is the object of faith and worship. Mr. *Durham* on *Rev.* i. concerning the object of worship, *p. (mihi)* 7. says, 'Divine worship is given to Christ as he is 'God, and because he is God.—When this worship is given 'to him, it is given to the person who is Mediator, and that 'in one individual act; for he as God is not worshipped one 'way, and as man another way; nor is there a division of 'his

† *Aug. de anima dicit*, Eo ipso est imago ejus, quo capax ejus est, ejusque esse particeps potest: virtus autem sensitiva, cùm per organum materiale & sensibile cognoscat, nullo modo ordinatur ad hoc, ut cognoscere possit intellectuales creaturas. *De Trin. c.* 8.

'his natures to be conceived: But the person who is man, 'is worshipped with this divine honour, in the same act, be-'cause he is God.' To teach the necessity of that imaginary idea of Christ as man, which cannot apprehend him to be God, and to make the object of that idea, to be the object of faith, seems equal to that mental idolatry of making some corporeal representation of him who is the invisible God; to which the minds of all men are so naturally prone, and even the minds of the most exercised Christians, as Mr. *Andrew Gray* says, in his *Communion Sermons, p.* 126. 'A Christian 'sometimes in his enjoyments falls into the sin of idolatry. 'Is it not so when ye are nearest God? Ye study to bring 'down God in some visible shape or idea, that so that vi-'sible shape of God may provoke fear. And this is damnable 'idolatry, transforming the invisible God into the image of 'a visible thing'

To this purpose Mr. *Thomas Boston*, in his *Fourfold State, Edinb. edit.* 1735. *p.* 56. hath these words: 'Doth not the car-'nal mind naturally strive to grasp spiritual things in *imagi-'nation*; as if the soul were quite immersed in flesh and 'blood, and would turn every thing into its own shape? Let 'men who are used to the forming of the most abstracted 'notions, look into their own souls, and they shall find this 'bias in their minds: Whereof the idolatry which did of 'old, and still doth so much prevail in the world, is an un-'contestable evidence. For it plainly discovers, that men na-'turally would have a *visible Deity*, and *see* what they wor-'ship: And therefore *they changed the glory of the incorru-'ptible God into an image made like to corruptible man*, &c. 'Rom. i. 23. The reformation of these nations (blessed be 'the Lord for it) hath banished idolatry and images too out 'of our churches: But heart-reformation only can break 'down *mental* idolatry, and banish the more subtile and refi-'ned image-worship, and representations of the Deity, out of 'the minds of men. The world in the time of its darkness 'was never more prone to the former, than the unsanctified 'mind is to the latter. And hence are horrible, monstrous, 'and misshapen thoughts of God, Christ, the glory above, and 'all spiritual things.'

Bp. *Burnet*, however erroneous and heterodox in several other points, yet, as a person of known learning and great abilities, may here be quoted as giving his mind in a very sound, solid and orthodox manner on this subject, in his book, intitled, *An exposition of the thirty nine Articles of the Church of England, Art.* 22. *Edinb. edit. p.* 352. Where, speaking

ſpeaking of the idolatry of the church of *Rome*, he ſays, 'The 'Papiſts pretend there is an uſefulneſs in outward figures, to 'raiſe the mind by the ſenſes to juſt apprehenſions of ſpiritual 'objects. But [ſays he] the effect is quite contrary to the 'pretence: For, inſtead of raiſing the mind by the ſenſes, 'the mind is rather ſunk by them into groſs ideas.' He adds, 'The bias of human nature lies to ſenſe, and to form groſs 'imaginations of incorporeal objects: And therefore, inſtead 'of gratifying theſe, we ought to wean our minds from them, 'and to raiſe them above them all we can. Even men of 'ſpeculation and abſtraction feel nature in this grows too 'hard for them: But the vulgar is apt to fall ſo headlong in-'to theſe conceits, that it looks like the laying of ſnares for 'them, to furniſh them with ſuch methods and helps for 'their having groſs thoughts of ſpiritual objects.

To this purpoſe alſo Mr. *Fraſer* of *Brea*, on *faith*, *p.* 156, 157, 158, 159. ſpeaks of 'ſuch as come to, and cloſe with 'a Chriſt and idol of their own fancy; and it is thus: 'When men hear tell of Chriſt, the idolatry of the *carnal* '*mind* doth preſently form a kind of carnal image of Chriſt 'in its own fancy, and falls down and worſhips, and be-'lieves this idol thus fancied, *Hoſ.* xiii. 2. *Acts* xvii. 29. '—Their imagination formeth ſome idea of him, to what 'the *idolatrous* carnal mind doth aſſimilate him; which idea 'is all they have for Chriſt. Verily, when Chriſt is ex-'ternally revealed, there muſt be a glorious light to diſcover 'Chriſt, as he is in himſelf; which light is from God alone, 'and a ſupernatural work, and the beginning of all ſaving 'differencing good, and which diſcovers Chriſt to the ſoul 'really; that is, makes the ſoul ſee Chriſt as he is, though 'imperfectly, yet truly, not only as he is man, but as he is 'God-man; the glorious beams of the Godhead breaking 'through, and appearing in the face of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. as 'he is *full of grace and truth*, and glory, ſo as the ſoul can-'not but cleave and adhere to, and truſt on him: They that '*know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*, and love, joy 'and glory in him only, and above all. Whereas this idola-'trous apprehenſion of Chriſt, is a mere dead fancy, and is 'lifeleſs, (like external idols;) doth *not transform the ſoul* '*into the ſame image*, nor humble, nor rejoice the ſoul, but 'the ſoul continueth in the ſame caſe it was. And as they 'are affected with Chriſt, ſo with every other thing, with 'God, with death, hell, heaven, with ſin, and other ſpiri-'tual matters, which *the natural man cannot conceive, becauſe* '*ſpiritually diſcerned*. But as a blind man who never ſaw,

'doth

'doth colours, so it forms its own apprehensions of these 'things, and sees them in its carnal light, which misappre- 'hends every thing, and conceives not truly of things as they 'are in themselves; and hence doth not affect the heart suit- 'ably, because they are not real, but painted fancies. Now, 'this spiritual light which discovers Christ, hell, wrath, and 'sin, really as they are, is the first spiritual and fundamental 'difference between a truly godly man, *to whom the arm of* 'the Lord is revealed, and another carnal man, though ne- 'ver otherwise so well qualified. And as this light doth 'spring out of darkness, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. so, when it shines, and 'discovers spiritual objects, it makes the soul see its former 'blindness. And, till this marvellous light of glory shine in 'some measure into thy soul, thou art but a stranger unto 'the kingdom of God, and work of grace; and night and 'day, whenever thou makest thy address to God or Christ, 'art guilty of spiritual idolatry, worshipping that idol of thy 'own framing. And hence, *John* vi. 40. *seeing of the Son,* '*and believing on him*, are joined together. Which seeing 'of Christ is the gift of God, as faith is; and is so far above 'the natural man, that he cannot thus see, more than the 'stone-blind man can behold what is before him. This is 'the form of knowledge which many have, *Rom.* ii. 20. And 'hence folk talk of what they understand not, and affirm 'of what they know not, 1 *Tim.* i. 7.'

The same may be said of a mental image or an imagina- ry idea of Christ as man, that Dr. *Owen* (on the *person of Christ, p.* 168.) says of an outward image representing Christ in glory: 'What is there in it that hath the least respect there- 'unto, the least likeness of it? Nay, is it not the most effe- 'ctual means that can be devised to divert the minds of men 'from true and real apprehensions of it? Doth it teach any 'thing of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ in 'the person of the Son of God? Nay, doth it not obliterate 'all thoughts of it? What is represented thereby of the uni- 'on of it unto God, and the immediate communications of 'God unto it? Doth it declare the manifestation of all the 'glorious properties of the divine nature in him? One thing 'indeed they ascribe unto it that is proper unto Christ, name- 'ly, that it is to be adored and worshipped, [or, I may add, 'made an object of faith;] whereby they add idolatry to their 'folly. Persons who know not what it is to live by faith, 'whose minds are never raised by spiritual, heavenly con- 'templations, who have no design in religion but to grati- 'fy their inward superstition by their outward senses, may

'be

'be pleaſed for a time, and ruined for ever by theſe delu-
'ſions.' The ſame author (*p.* 164.) is ſo far from thinking men may have an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, as we may have of other men, that he thus ſpeaks of Chriſt's human nature: 'The eternal ſubſiſtence of that nature of his in the 'perſon of the Son of God, as this belongs unto its dignity 'and honour, ſo it doth alſo unto its inherent glory. This 'is and ſhall be eternally peculiar unto him, in diſtinction 'from, and exaltation above the whole creation of God, angels and men.——— Some inquire, whether the ſaints in 'heaven do perfectly comprehend the myſtery of the incarnation of the Son of God? I do not well underſtand what 'is meant by perfectly comprehend. But this is certain, that 'what is now by faith, we ſhall have there by ſight.——No 'finite creature can have an abſolute comprehenſion of that 'which is infinite. We ſhall never ſearch out the Almighty 'in any of his works of infinite wiſdom. Wherefore this 'only I ſhall ſay, there is ſuch a ſatisfactory evidence in hea-'ven, not only of the truth, but alſo of *the nature of this* 'myſtery, as that the glory of Chriſt therein is manifeſt, as 'an eternal object of divine adoration and honour.——— 'Farther our thoughts cannot attain. This is that wherein 'the glory of the human nature of Chriſt doth eſſentially excel and differ from that of any other bleſſed creature whatever.'

Faith and fancy are (if I may thus expreſs it) ſo incoaleſcible or unmixable, and their objects ſo different, that Mr. *Robe*, in attempting to make Chriſt's human nature as it is corporeal to be the object of faith, has debaſed it ſo far, as to make it, not the object of rational knowledge, but only of a mere ſenſitive imaginary idea. Hence, *p.* 31. and many other places, he makes his conceiving of Chriſt as true and real man to be what he calls the imaginary idea of him; and then he makes the conceiving of his Godhead and perſonality, acts of the underſtanding. By which means he makes the conceiving of Chriſt as true and real man no proper act of the underſtanding, but merely of ſenſe and fancy. At this rate the human body of Chriſt is ſunk below the dignity of any other human body living: For of it ſuch an intellectual view may be taken, that any man may ſay of the make and frame thereof, as *Pſal.* cxxxix. 14, 15. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My ſubſtance*) or body, as in the margin) *was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the earth.* How abſurd were it to make all this only the object of an imagina-

ry

ry idea, because the contemplation of this curious piece of divine workmanship cannot take place, according to Mr. *Robe*, without one's forming in his brain the image of that substance in the condition it was in when an embryo, and before it saw the light, and which the fancy may take liberty to conceive of formed or not formed, monstrous or not so, according to the pleasure of fanciers? One might blush to think, that any man's reason is so immersed in sense, as to bring in upon this subject that sensitive image which necessarily diverts the mind from the former rational and religious consideration, and to denominate the whole from, I need not say, the least and worst part, but from that which is no part at all of the foresaid consideration, namely, the dead image of a corporeal substance in his head.

'But now, if a man's own body may, as in the above instance, be the object of a rational and intellectual view, and yet the human nature and body of Christ be only (according to Mr. *Robe*'s expressions) the object of an imaginary idea, then a man might see more excellency in his own, than he can see in the human nature or body of Christ; though yet there was never a creature in heaven or earth so fearfully and wonderfully made, nor was there ever a substance so curiously wrought as the human nature of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost: And yet, being but a creature, never was, nor will be the proper object of faith or worship, but as and because it is personally united to, and subsisteth in the eternal λογος, the Word that was made flesh. How dreadfully then is the human nature of Christ debased, and this glorious mystery trampled under foot, by making that curious piece of God's wonderful workmanship the object of any man's fancy or imaginary idea; which, as I have said, is no part of rational knowledge? But, as none can think rightly of Christ's human nature abstract from the great mystery of his incarnation, and the assumption of that nature into his own divine personality, in which alone it subsists; so there can be no religious conception of it but by faith: It is otherwise both inconceivable and unutterable. 'It is said by the Prophet, not only 'with respect to the divine essence of the Son of God, but also 'with respect to his human nature, *Who shall declare his gene-* 'ration? Isa. liii. 8. For that both these substances or natures 'should meet in one person, if faith do not believe, words cannot explain†.' This is still true of Christ's human nature, it is a continued mystery, and will be so for ever.

† Quia in Christo Iesu, Filio Dei, non solum ad divinam essentiam, sed

How far from being the proper object of an imaginary idea is that human nature of Christ, under the vestment whereof he could in his humbled state say, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me,* John xiv. 11. and again, *I and my Father are one?* John x. 30. On which a Christian poet has an excellent comment, as at the foot of the page †. Where he wittily and wisely both, from the word *unus*, ONE, refutes the *Arians*, who denied the equality of the three persons in the unity of the Godhead; and from the word *sumus*, ARE, refutes the *Sabellians*, who deny the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, and made them all one, or but three names or offices. This poet lived about the year 430. And many of the schoolmen after him made use of the same manner of distinction which he points at by the words, *qui* and *quod*; while they shew, that in the holy Trinity there is not *aliud atque aliud*, because the essence is one; yet there is *alius atque alius*, because the persons are three. But in Christ there is *aliud atque aliud*, not in point of parts, but in point of number, for his natures are two; yet not *alius atque alius*, for his person is one. Even as soul and body are two things; yet they make but one man, one person: So the divine and human natures of Christ are one person. The faith of a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead is what *Sedulius* here calls *fides trina*. The faith of the unity not only of the two distinct natures of Christ in one person, but the oneness of this person Christ with the Father in divine essence, he calls *fides una*. Never did he, or any wise man beside, make any part of this mystery the object of an imaginary idea, but still of faith. Concerning which glorious object the same poet sings in the sweet strain the learned may see exemplified at the foot of the page ‡. I thought it worth the reader's while to

sed etiam ad humanam spectat naturam, quod dictum est per prophetam, *Generationem ejus quis enarrabit?* Utramque enim substantiam in unam convenisse personam, nisi fides credat, sermo non explicat. *Leo, serm. 9. de nativit.*

† Non quia *qui* summus Pater est, & Filius *hic* est,
Sed quia *quod* summus Pater est, & Filius *hoc* est.
Sic ait ipse docens: *et Ego in Patre, & Pater in me est;*
Rursus, *Ego atque Pater unum sumus.* *Arrius* UNUM
Debet scire, SUMUSque, *Sabellius* esse fatendum:
Ille fidem *trinam*; ast hic non amplectitur *unam*.
Ambo errore pares, quanquam diversa sequantur.
C. Sedulii Scoti carm. lib. 1. p. 18.

‡ *Filius* hic hominis sit maxima quæstio mundi,
Nobiscum Deus est Filius hic Hominis.———

Lumen

to transcribe the lines of another poet concerning the mysterious humanity and incarnation of our Lord Jesus, in these words:

VIR, *tamen arbitrio non debens membra virili,*
Non patrio natus sanguine, purus homo:
Non MULIER, *tamen è muliebri fusus in auras*
Seminè, virginei nobile ventris onus:
Diligit ex æquo sexum Salvator utrumque,
VIR MULIER*que Deo sunt in amore pares.*

The meaning whereof may be shortly summed up thus:

Christ was a MAN, *yet of no man indeed;*
No WOMAN, *yet alone the woman's seed:*
A man of woman, not of man, to prove
Both MAN *and* WOMAN *equal in his love.*

To which words relating to Christ's humanity, may be added the words of another *Latin* poet, relating to his divinity, saying,

Qui crucifixus erat, Deus ecce! per omnia regnat.

Or of Sir *Richard Blackmore*, on *redemption*, *p.* 225. saying,

He does, as God supreme, our worship claim,
And, though distinct in person and in name,
With the Most High in nature *is the same.*

Both these conjunctly viewed, afford men and women a noble and glorious object of faith and spiritual knowledge: But to seek after materials for fancy here, though it find what it seeks, is but a vain and vile exercise, no way fit to faith.

Dr. *Owen*, in his book, intitled, *A vindication of the animadversions on* lux fiat, speaking of the Popish images of Christ, which, as I have said before, are but the fruit and offspring of mental images, hath these words, *p.* 506. 'I know, that one of the great fathers of your *second* '*Nicene* faith publickly affirmed, in the council, with the 'approbation of his associates, that Christ is so present with, 'or related unto his *image*, that he that should speak of it, 'and should say, *This is Christ*, should not err. But I know 'also, he did it with as much *wisdom* as he whom the Pro'phet derides for carving a stock into the likeness of a man,

Lumen adesse Dei persensit Tartarus ingens;
Nec cernunt homines lumen adesse Dei.——
Hic homo qui Deus est, spes est antiqua piorum;
Spes in fine piis, hic homo qui Deus est.——
Visio, Christe, tui, tormentum & pœna malorum est;
Gloria cuncta bonis visio, Christe, tui.

'and then saying unto it, *Thou art my God.* So, Sir, you 'may not with your *bodily eyes* look on him that was crucified, because you cannot. And as looking on the picture 'of him, which you mean, is nothing of that which we contend about; so I fear it is unto you only a means of taking you from looking after his *person* in a way of *believing*, which he so earnestly calls us unto.' *Pag.* 508. 'You 'next proceed to your plea from the *cherubims* set up by *Moses* in the holy place over the ark; and thence you will 'needs wrest an argument for your images, and the worship of them; although your *Vasquez* is ashamed of it, 'and hath cashiered it long ago, and that worthily, as not 'at all belonging unto this matter.—— It is of images we are 'speaking precisely, and not of figures. Figures may include '*types* and *hieroglyphicks*, and any representation of things. 'Images represent persons; and such alone are those about 'which we treat. And, if a *person* be not presented by an 'image, it is not his image.' [So, by the by, note, that, since the person of Christ is not presented by the image of him which is formed in the brain by an imaginary idea, it is not his image.] 'Now, I pray, tell me, What *personal* '*subsistences* these cherubims with their various wings and faces did represent? Do you believe, that they gave you 'the shape and likeness of angels? It is true, that *John*, 'the Bishop of *Thessalonica*, in your synod of *Nice*, with 'the approbation of the rest of his company, affirms, that 'it was the opinion of the Catholick church, that angels and 'archangels were not altogether *incorporeal and invisible*, '*but to have a slender body of air or fire*, Act. v. But are 'you of the same mind? Or do you not rather think, that 'the Catholick church was belied and abused by the synod? 'And, if they are absolutely incorporeal and invisible, how 'can an image be made of them? Should a man look on 'the cherubims as images of angels? Would not the first 'thing they teach, be a lie? namely, that angels are like 'unto them; which is the first language of any image whatever. The truth is, the *Mosaical* cherubims were mere *hieroglyphicks*, to represent the constant tender love and watchfulness of God over the ark of his covenant, and had nothing of the nature of images in them.' *Pag.* 519. 'And is 'it not a fine business to talk of seeing the face of God, 'which shone forth in Christ, in a carved image or a painted figure? Is not this to confess plainly, that your images 'are teachers of lies.' *Pag.* 520. 'Your last exception is laid 'against what I affirmed concerning the relation you fancy

'between

'between the image and its prototype, (or its first pattern;) 'whereby you would excuse the honour and worship which 'you give unto it; which I said is a mere effect of your 'own imagination, on which alone it depends.— But, you 'add, *Is the picture made by the spectators imagination to 'represent this or that thing, or the imagination rather gui-'ded to it by the picture? By this rule of your's, the image 'of* Cæsar, *did not my imagination help it, would no more 'represent a man than a mouse.*' But you quite mistake the 'matter. The relation you fancy includes two things: *1st*, 'That this *image* represents not a man in general, but this 'or that individual man in particular, and that exclusively 'to all others; for instance, *Simon Peter*, and not *Simon 'Magus*, who was a man no less than he or any other man 'whatever. Now, though herein the imagination may be 'assisted, when it hath any certain grounds of discerning a 'particular likeness in an image unto one man when he was 'living, more than to another; yet you in most of your i-'mages are destitute of any such assistance. You know not 'at all that your images represent any thing *peculiar* in the 'persons whereof you pretend them to be the images; which 'sufficiently appears by the variety that is in the images 'whereby you represent the same person, even Christ him-'self, in several places. So that, though *every man in his 'right wits* may conceive that an image is *the image of a 'man, and not of a mouse*; yet that it should be the image 'of this or that man, of Christ himself or *Peter*, he hath no 'ground to imagine, but what is suggested unto him by his 'imagination, directed by the circumstances of its place and 'title.

'When *Clodius* had thrust *Cicero* into banishment, to do him 'the greater spite, he demolished his house, and dedicated it 'as a *devoted* place to their gods, setting up in it the image 'of the goddess *Libertas*. The *orator*, upon his return, in 'his oration *ad pontifices*, for the recovery of his house, to o-'verthrow this pretended *dedication* and devotion of it, pleads 'two things. *First*, That the image pretended by *Clodius* to 'be the image of *Libertas*, was indeed the image of a *famous*, 'or, rather *infamous whore* that lived at *Tanager*. Had this 'dedication passed, I wonder how this image could have any 'relation unto *Libertas*, but by virtue of the imagination of 'its worshippers, when in very deed it was the image of a 'Tangrean whore. And the same orator tells us of a famous 'painter, who, making the picture of *Venus*, and her com-'panions for their temples, still drew them by *some strumpet*

'or

'or other that he kept company withal. And, whether you 'have not been so imposed upon sometimes or no, I very 'much question. In which case nothing but your imagination can free you from the worship of a *Quean*, when you 'aim your devotion another way. *Secondly*, He pleads, 'That the *dedication* of that image was not regularly religious, nor according to that institution which they esteemed '*divine*; whence no sacredness in it could ensue. And want 'of institution which may be so esteemed, is that also which 'we object against your *dedication* of images: For, besides 'a relation to this or that individual person, which, as I have 'shewed, the most of your images have not, but what in 'your fancy you give unto them, which is natural or civil; 'you fancy also a *religious relations*, a sacred conjunction be'tween the image and prototype; so that the worship yield'ed to the one, should redound to the other in a religious 'way.' And this, I say, is also the product of your own fancy. — And, if you could pretend divine institution constitu'ting a sacred relation between images and their prototypes, 'yet it would not presently follow, that they were to be wor'shipped; no not supposing the prototypes themselves to be 'the proper objects of religious adoration, which, as to the 'most of them, you know we deny, unless you have also a *com'mand* to warrant you. For there is, by the institution of 'God himself, a *sacramental relation* between the water in 'baptism, and the blood of Christ; and yet I do not know 'that you plead that the *water* is to be worshipped. And 'thus is it as to your *wooden cross*. You put two sticks a'cross, and worship them; you take them asunder, and burn 'them. It is the very instance of your *Nicene council*; for 'so they repeat the words of *Leontius*, and approve them, '*Act* 4. *Whilst the two sticks of the cross are put together or 'compacted, I adore that figure for Christ's sake, who suffer'ed thereon; but, when they are separated, I cast them away, 'and burn them.* A pretty course, whereby a man may keep 'a *sacred fire*, and worship all his *wood pile* before he burns 'it! And all this you are beholden to your imagination for.'

All this idolatry, I add, is owing then to the vain imaginary idea of Christ as man, and the imagination presenting to the understanding the figure of a cross, as Mr. *Robe* speaks, *p.* 45. of his *letter*: Where he seems to cry down external images and crucifixes, and yet cries up and extols this internal imagery; to which is owing all the popish images: Whereof it is said, in the foresaid book, *p.* 487. 'That whereas the *Pagans* 'worshipped the images of *Jupiter* and *Minerva*, and the 'like,

'like, they (the *Papists*) in like manner worshipped the images of Christ and his Apostles. And therefore in the *Indies* the Catholick *Spaniards* took away the *Zemes*, or images of their idols, that the poor natives had before, and gave them the images of Christ, and his mother, in their stead.' To this also was owing their fondness to believe all the idle stories in their fabulous legends, to confirm their superstition by feigned wonders and miracles said to have been wrought by their images: Some whereof are recited by the same author, *p.* 489. who there adds, 'They all consent in the story of the image of Christ, made without hands, or human help, by God alone, (θεοπεσίης,) that he sent to *Abgarus*, King of the *Edessenes*; [who, as some report the story, was contemporary with Christ, and, hearing of his great miracles, invited him to *Edessa* by a letter; to which Christ is said to have sent an answer with his picture:] as bellowing a lie as any in the herd.'

Charnock, vol. II. *p.* 402. says, 'To worship what we misconceive, is not to worship the true God, but a god coined and moulded by our own fancy. If we know not God; yet, since we have naturally a notion that there is a God, we shall be apt to have false conceptions and misrepresentations of him. And, since false conceptions of God are degradings and disparagements to him, all worship guided by them, is a worship of that notion and image we have set up in our mind, and not a worship of the true God;—— we worship not a scripture-god, but a fancy-god; a god made up of the *capricio's* of our own brains, and modelled according to our own *genius*.'——*P.* 103. 'We cannot then worship God, without the knowledge of him. We cannot know him in Christ by all the strength of nature, without divine revelation.' *Ibid.* 'Such an ignorant worship is certainly idolatry. 'Tis not only a *wrong object* draws upon men the guilt of idolatry, but a right object worshipped in a *wrong manner*; when we worship him not suitably to his perfections, or not according to his command, *Lev.* xvii. 3, 4. 7.' *P.* 480. 'Nature (itself) can never teach men to worship God in images unless they were able to frame one in which they could gather and store up the perfections of all creatures; and that is as impossible for any or all creatures to perform, as to make a god. All this is as intelligible to a rational creature, as the shining of the sun is visible. The one is as evident in the work of creation to our reason, as the other is to our sense.'

Mr. *Hugh Binning*, in his book, intitled, *The common principles*

ciples of the Christian religion proved, &c. edit. 1660. *p.* 118. speaks to excellent purpose on this subject, when discoursing on the spirituality of the divine nature. His words are: 'Many ignorant people form in their own mind some likeness 'and image of God, who is invisible. You know how ye 'fancy to yourselves some bodily shape when you conceive 'of him; you think he is some reverend and majestick person, sitting on a throne in heaven. But, I beseech you, 'correct your mistakes of him. There is outward idolatry, 'and there is inward: There is idolatry in action, when men 'paint or engrave some similitude of God; and there is idolatry in imagination, when the fancy and apprehension runs 'upon some image or likeness of God. The first is among 'Papists; but I fear the latter be too common among us. 'And it is indeed all one, to form such a similitude in our 'mind, and to engrave or paint it without: so that the God 'whom many of us worship, is not the living and true God, 'but a painted or graven idol. When God appeared most 'visible to the world, as at the giving out of the law; yet 'no man did see any likeness at all: He did not come under the perception of the most subtile sense; he could not 'be perceived but by the retired understanding, going aside 'from all things visible. And therefore you do but fancy 'an idol to yourselves instead of God, when you apprehend 'him under the likeness of any visible or sensible thing; and 'so, whatever love, or fear, or reverence you have, it is 'all but mispent superstition, the love and fear of an idol.'

Lyford's Catechism, on the *Second Command*, p. 132, 133. 'Q. Well then, here we are forbidden to worship God after 'our own *wits* and *wills*, What is particularly forbidden in 'this kind? *Answer.* 1. The making of any image, either of 'God, or of any creature, for religious use, that is, to *help* '*us* in our worshipping of God. The likeness and represen-'tation of any thing whatsoever is a *false help* and *mean* of 'worship, *Exodus* xxxii. 1. 4. *Psal.* cvi. 20. *Jer.* x. 8. 14, 15. '*Ezek.* viii. 10. *Jer.* l. 38. and li. 17, 18, 19. Q. Is it lawful 'to make an image of the Trinity, or of any person in the 'Godhead? *Answer.* It is utterly unlawful, and a great dishonour, to figure the incorruptible God by the shape of a 'base and corruptible man, or bird, or other creature, *Deut.* 'iv. 15, 16, 17, 18, *Rom.* i. 23. *Acts* xvii. 24. 29. *Isa.* xl. 14, 15. '18, 19. *Hab.* ii. 18. [It abuseth our understandings. The party thinks there is some *good in an image*, else he would not 'make it; and *that's a lie*: He lieth that sheweth me a toad, 'and says, it is the picture of an angel; so, *&c.*] All the pi-'ctures

'ctures of Christ in the flesh, as that of Christ on the cross, 'and in his resurrection, are lies, false in their representations, 'and false in the conceit of any good by them.'] I subjoin, that all this is equally true of mental images. *Confession of Faith, chap.* 21. § 1.—'The acceptable way of worshipping 'the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his 'own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped accord-'ing to the imagination and devices of men.'—*Larger Catechism,* Among the sins forbidden in the first command, is, 'idolatry, in having or worshipping more gods than one, or 'any with, or instead of the true God.' Among the sins forbidden in the second command, is, 'the making any repre-'sentation of God, of all, or of any of the three persons, ei-'ther inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of 'image, or likeness of any kind of creature whatsoever.' Consequently it forbids the making an imaginary idea of Christ as man, any part of the object of faith or worship; because Christ as man is a creature: But the true Christ is the true God in our nature. *Shorter Catechism,* 'The first command-'ment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glo-'rifying the true God *as God.*' How can this agree with an imaginary idea of him *as man?* The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images; but the fore-said idea is an image of Christ in the head.

Having so far noticed the mind of divines, I might next adduce the sentiments of philosophers on this subject. But I have prevented the need of doing so, by quoting some of them already in the forgoing part of this book; such as, *Hiereboord, De Vries, Davenant, Mastricht, Alting, Maccovius, Arnold, Charnock, Arrowsmith, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, Aretius, Tertullian, Lullius, Beza,* and others, that were philosophers as well as divines; from whom some hints have been given to this purpose. I shall therefore close this chapter by noticing some philosophical rules that are transgressed by Mr. *Robe*'s position on this point, considered as a point of philosophy.

Sect. II.

A philosophical demonstration of the direct falshood and fallacy of Mr. Robe's *leading position and repeated assertion; or, A plain discovery, that, when it is said,* That none can believe in the person God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, *it is a plain falshood, yet covered with a mask of truth under technical and deceitful terms, tending to delude the mind by a sophistical equivocation.*

If we carry along this repeated assertion of Mr. *Robe*'s, That the imaginary idea hath no other but a corporeal object, then his argument, when put in form, is this:

To believe in the person of Christ God-man, includes a conceiving of both natures, divine and human, including the human body;

But to conceive of a human body, which is a corporeal object, is impossible without an imaginary idea thereof:

Therefore faith in the person of Christ God-man is impossible, without an imaginary idea of his human body. And, for strengthening his argument, let this be added, as he does several times, namely, because Christ is as surely a man having a human body, as it is sure he is God.

Answer. The conclusion is false; because the premisses are sophistical. And I prove the falshood of Mr. *Robe*'s conclusion, by these following rules of the schools †.

I. *A propositione illimitata ad limitatam, non valet consequentia*; that is, *From an unlimited proposition to a limited one, the consequence deduced is not valid,* but false. The first proposition in the above argument is unlimited, respecting the entire object of faith, the person of Christ, God-man, in both natures; but the second proposition is limited to the human body: Therefore the consequence drawn from the one to the other, is false and absurd. Because one cannot think of the body of a man but *sensitively*, will it follow, that therefore he cannot think of the person of a man *rationally*, without viewing him sensitively? It is false; for a man can take a rational view of a person as such, without limiting and restricting his view of that person to the sensitive notion of his natural body ‡. And hence,

II. *A notitia intellectiva ad sensitivam, non valet consequentia*;

† *Maccovii & Arnoldi distinctiones & regulæ theologicæ & philosophicæ, p.* 167, 168, 169. 198, 199.

‡ Accuratè oportet distinguere inter axiomata *limitata & illimitata*; inter propositionem *limitatam & illimitatam.* Ubi supra, p. 168.

tia; that is, *From intellectual knowledge to sensitive, the consequence deduced is not valid*, but vain and false. The first proposition in the above argument of Mr. *Robe*'s respects the object of intellectual knowledge, the person of Christ in both his natures; the second respects only that which is the object of sensitive knowledge, a human body: Therefore his conclusion will not hold, namely, That the faith of Christ's person as God-man cannot be without an imaginary idea of his human body. Though these two ideas, intellective and sensitive, attend each other as close as soul and body; yet they differ as much as soul and body do: And therefore, though they are not without one another's *company*, yet they are without one another's operating aid and assistance; for they do not work to one another's hand, but as it were with their backs one to another. They look and work contrary ways, their acts and objects being different. Therefore, however closely they are linked together, they cannot see the same things, nor elicit the same acts.

Hence, to say, we cannot think of Christ, or believe in him, as God-man, without an imaginary idea of him as man, because he is as surely man as he is God, is a false and sophistical dream; because, when we believe in him as God-man, we have a real and rational view of his manhood, as well as his Godhead, and of the compleat glorious object of faith. But to say, we cannot do this without the imaginary idea of him as man, is a going quite away from that subject, to another theme, another sphere of action, another world; namely, from an intellectual world, to a sensitive †; to take an ideal view of such a supposed corporeal part of that object, as is not at all in itself the object of faith or intellectual knowledge, but of sense and fancy. As if one should say, You cannot see a man to be a rational man, without eyes to see him to be a man, or a human body, because he is as surely a man as he is rational. But, say I, can you see him with your eyes to be a rational man, or observe his intellectuals, with bodily organs? No; as he is a man, having a human body, he is only the object of sensitive knowledge, but as he is a rational man, the object of rational and intellectual knowledge. Therefore it is a falshood to say, I cannot see or know him to be a rational man without seeing him with my eyes, or in my imagination, as a man: For the imaginary idea cannot reduplicate or reflect upon the compleat subject spoken of, but only upon the mere corporeal figure

† Physica sunt sensibilia; Logica verò sunt intelligibilia. Cognitio item dividitur in sensitivam & intellectivam. *Ubi supra*, *p.* 168.

of a man; which is not at all the object of rational knowledge, but of ſenſe and imagination.

III. *A perſona ad rem, non valet conſequentia* *; that is, *A conſequence deduced from a perſon to a thing, will not hold.* In the above argument of Mr. *Robe*'s, the firſt propoſition, called the *major*, relates to the *perſon* of Chriſt; the ſecond, called the *minor*, relates not to a perſon, but a *thing*; that is, the human body of Chriſt: Therefore the concluſion will not hold, That I cannot believe in *that perſon* without the imaginary idea of *that thing*. *That perſon* cannot be ſeen but by the eye of ſpiritual knowledge and faith, that ſees what is inviſible: But *that thing* cannot be ſeen but by the eye of ſenſe or fancy, that ſees what is viſible and corporeal. To ſay, that the eye of faith cannot act upon the *perſon* without the eye of ſenſe, which acts upon ſome other thing than the perſon, is abſurd. It is a ſaying, I cannot ſee by the eye of the underſtanding without ſeeing by the eye of ſenſe †; nor ſee by the eye of faith without ſeeing by the eye of fancy; and that I cannot conceive in my judgment the good or bad properties of a man's perſon, without forming in my brain the lineaments of his body. If theſe two cannot be without one another in point of *cohabitation in the ſame perſon*, yet they cannot be, nor act, but without one another in point of *co-operation, in the ſame way, to the ſame end:* For, as I ſaid, they take different roads, and move towards different points; the one towards a *perſon*, the other towards a *thing*, that is no perſon at all †. In like manner,

IV. *A tota re ad totum rei, non valet conſequentia.* Philoſophy diſtinguiſhes betwixt theſe two, *tota res*, a whole thing, and *totum rei*, the whole of that thing; and juſtly reckons, that the conſequence drawn from a whole thing to the whole of that thing, is void and falſe. Now, in the foreſaid

* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 167.

† *Nihil eſt in intellectu, quod non antè fuerit in ſenſu*, is a maxim to be limited, as I have ſhewed above, when objects of faith, as ſuch, are ſpoken of. *Formale relationis non occurrit in ſenſus, ſed percipitur vel intelligitur fide*, Maccov. cent. p. 181. *Mareſii diſtinctio inter intellectum noëticum & dianoëticum, omnino obtinere poteſt; adeò ut quamvis non ſit in intellectu dianoëtico quod non fuerit aliquo ſaltem modo in ſenſibus, attamen poſſit eſſe in intellectu noëtico quod non fuerit in ſenſibus, ſcil. per ſimplicem & immediatam apprehenſionem intellectûs; quod omnino ſtatuimus fieri in congenita Dei cognitione, non equidem ex idea Dei, ſed, ex coexiſtente intellectui ipſa Dei eſſentia.* Maſtr. Carteſ. gangræna, p. 207.

‡ *Sola divina natura eſt [Chriſti] perſona, quæ in ſuam perſonalitatem aſſumpſit naturam humanam*, &c. Ubi ſupra, p. 111. *humana verò natura eſt adjunctum* ἀνυπόστατον.

said argument of Mr. *Robe*'s, the *major* proposition relates to the whole person of Christ God and man as the object of faith; but the second, the *minor*, supposes faith to have the whole of that person for its object: Therefore the conclusion is false. This I shall exemplify, so as a child may understand it. There is a great difference betwixt a whole man, and the whole of a man. When we speak of *rationality*, we ascribe it to the whole man, because the person is rational; but not to the whole of the man, because we cannot say his feet or hands are rational †. So, when we speak of believing, it is the whole man that believes, because the person does so; but it is not the whole of the man, because his body does not. Again ‡, a whole Christ is every where, because so his person is; but the whole of Christ is not every where, because his human nature is not now on earth, but in heaven. Christ is in his whole person invisible, not in the whole of his person; as Dr. *Owen* says on another subject, *viz.* about Christ's sole headship over the church, in his *Vindication of the animadversions on* lux fiat, *p.* 383. 'That, the presence 'or absence of Christ's human nature not varying his head-'ship, which under both considerations is still the same, the 'supposition of another head is perfectly destructive of the 'whole headship of Christ; there being no vacancy possible 'to be imagined for that supply, but by the removal of Christ 'out of his place: For, he being head of the church *as God* 'and man, *in his whole person invisible*, and the visibility of 'the church consisting in its own profession of the truth, the 'absence

† Homo videt, non quà homo, aut quà rationale, sed quà sensitivum. Ubi analysis ultima sit in τὸ sensitivum, non verò in humanitatem aut rationalitatem.——Et dicendum est, homo videt quà sensitivum, non verò quà rationale, vel sub illo formali, quà homo. *Voetii disp. p.* 531.—— Universale non est objectum formale cognitionis sensitivæ; ergo universale non cognoscitur à sentiente quà tali: & consequenter non est dicendum, homo, quà sentiens, cognoscit universalia; sed est dicendum, homo, quà rationalis, cognoscit illa. *Ibid. p.* 530.

‡ *Maccovii distinct. p.* 199. Tota res & totum rei differunt. Tota res dicitur de subjecto, ratione alterius partis; totum rei de utraque parte subjecti; ut, totus homo intelligit & moritur, sed non totum hominis; totus Christus est ubique, sed non totum Christi. *P.* 166. Mala est communis distinctio illa quorundam scholasticorum inter veritatem *theologicam* & *philosophicam*. Vitium (1.)—(2.)—(3.)—(4.) Cùm scholastici deberent explicare hoc sophisma; *Mus habet pedem*, &c. dicebant pedem habere *irrationalem*; *rationale* enim pertinet ad totum hominem, (non totum hominis.) *P.* 107. aliud est *totus Christus*, Aliud *totum Christi*. Usus hujus (regulæ) est in hoc: (1.) Quòd totus Christus dicitur esse ubique, non autem totum Christi; (2.) Quia totus Christus à nobis adorari dicitur, non totum Christi; hoc est, humana natura.

'absence of Christ's human nature from the earth, neither 'changeth his own headship, nor prejudiceth the church's vi-'sibility, *&c.*' Thus also a whole Christ died for us; not the whole of Christ, because not the divine nature: A whole Christ also is the object of faith, because his person God-man is so; but not the whole of Christ, because his human body, or material flesh, as such, is not the object of faith, but of sense; otherwise it could not be a true visible body. An imaginary idea, having this only for its object, hath no part of the object of faith for its object. Faith hath no part of Christ for its object, but a whole Christ, or his whole person, that cannot be divided into parts, as I have shewed elsewhere†. And, seeing the object of fancy is only a supposed part of Christ, and the object of faith is really a whole Christ; therefore it necessarily follows, That that part which is the object of any man's fancy, cannot, as such, be the object of faith, so long as it is true, That a part is not the whole; and that the whole is the object of faith, and not a part.

In pursuance of the topick just now mentioned, I might observe, that that which is a truth in a *physical* and *natural* sense, may be a falshood in a *metaphysical* and in a *moral* sense. Thus, while soul and body are united, if any speak, as Mr. *Robe* gives occasion to do, saying, You cannot believe in Christ without your body and bodily organs: In a natural and physical sense, it is true, because the body is present with the soul; but in a metaphysical and moral sense it is false, because I believe with my soul, not with my body: Therefore, though, while I live, my soul cannot be without my body, yet it can believe without my body; even as I can reason and argue without my hands and feet, which are a part of my body, tho' I do not cut them off from it. Rationality, as I said, belongs to the person, the whole man: But it follows not, that therefore it belongs to the whole of the man; for feet and hands are neither agents nor instruments in reasoning. Thus, in believing the body is no proper agent, though the person is. A man believes not with

† *Alting exeg. p.* 28. Totus λόγος est in carne, quia est unitus carni. Totus etiam est extra carnem, quia carni non est inclusus, nec caro ei exæquata.

Alting controv. de persona Christi, p. 199. *Obj.* Lutheranorum. Per unionem totus Christus est ubique: atqui totus Christus constat divinâ & humanâ naturâ. Ergo. *Respond.* ad majorem, distinguendo inter totum masculini, & totum neutri generis. Totus quidem Christus est ubique; sed non totum Christi, hoc est, totaliter, secundum utramque naturam. Ratio, quia totus personam, totum utramque naturam denotat. Sic totus etiam mortuus; non autem totum, quia non divina natura.

with his bodily senses or members. And as it were monstrous to say, a man believes with his eyes and ears, with his hands and feet; even equally absurd is it to say, a man cannot believe without them.

The soul that can live without the body when the body is dead, can act without the body even while the body lives. That the soul cannot die when the body dies, is not only clearly taught in scripture, *Matth.* x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,* and many other places; but also hath been taught by Heathen philosophers, and that from this topick, among others, That it can act independently upon the body: And hence they argued, That as it is independent upon the body *in agendo,* that is, in its *acting,* so also *in essendo,* that is, in its being †. Whatever influence the body has upon the actions of the soul *objectively* and *occasionally*; yet all the actions that are properly soul-actions, are independent upon the body, both *subjectively* and *efficiently,* as philosophers observe; of which I have spoke elsewhere. The body can neither be the subject nor efficient in actions properly spiritual: And therefore it is false to suppose, that the soul which can live without the body, cannot act or believe without the body: And consequently it is a false position to assert, That none can believe in Christ as God-man without that corporeal organ by which we form imaginary ideas; the rational soul being inorganical; that is, having no such organ as belongs to the sensitive, material and corporeal frame, its nature being incorporeal, immaterial, spiritual and immortal. To this purpose says *Charnock, vol.* II. *p.* 481. speaking of the soul, 'It can 'subsist without the body; it doth not in all its motions 'depend upon it; it can reflect upon itself without it, 'view and please itself in its own perfections, abstracted 'from the body: Which shadows to us the self-sufficiency 'of God.' *Crawford's dying Thoughts, p.* 7, 8, 9, 10. 'The 'soul in man is a substance distinct from his body.—When 'the body sits still, and moves not hand or foot, the soul 'can fly with all its faculties as high as heaven in a moment. '—The soul hath felt such joys, as that the flames that burned its body, could not extinguish its joy.—It is a principle in us that not only understandeth, frameth notions of 'things, and reasoneth, but also it correcteth all the misre-

'presentations

† *Maccov. distinct. p.* 152. Philosophi Ethnici hoc animadverterunt, (*viz.* animæ hominum, corruptis corporibus, non pereunt:) idcirco etiam docent, quòd cùm anima rationalis inorganica sit, ut & independens à corpore in agendo, ita etiam in essendo.

'presentations of sense and fancy.—It can sit down, and 'judge upon its own acts; which the body cannot do: Yea, 'it can bid the body and all its concerns farewell for a while; 'and, by retiring into its own closet-operations, it can be-'have like a separate spirit, even while in the body. It is 'able to judge, not only of the present, but also of the fu-'ture existence of things, and likewise of their proportions 'and disproportions. Yea, also it can contemplate the na-'ture and perfections of God. All which is above the 'power of matter.—And whatever loss some may think 'they are at, in conceiving of a spirit; yet 'tis most cer-'tain, we have a more clear and distinct idea of a spirit, 'than of matter itself: For as it is only the attributes of 'matter we have any positive conception of, for, if stript 'of these, it wholly escapes our sight; so let a soul be view-'ed in its modes and attributes, there is nothing in nature we 'can conceive more certainly and clearly. And, though we 'even wanted an intuitive view of the soul, we need not much 'wonder at it, since it is so in our bodily sight; for the eye, 'tho' it see every thing else, cannot see itself, at least directly 'and immediately.' To this purpose also speak other writers.

Again, union may take place where there is no communion. When it is said, we cannot believe without our bodily senses and imaginations, in point of union between soul and body, it is true, the one cannot be without the other: But in point of communion it is false. As there is no fellowship between light and darkness, as little is there between faith and fancy. They are different faculties, respecting different objects, and under different governments. Sense and imagination in men, in so far as they are not free and voluntary, nor under the conduct of reason and religion, but natural and necessary, belonging to the sensitive, and not to the rational life, they are under no moral law, nor properly fall under commands, or prohibitions; even as the senses and fancies of brutes, being destitute of reason, are under no moral government. Fancy, then, or the imaginary idea, being in itself under no law, but what relates to the natural and animal life, to alledge we cannot believe without it, seems to bring the act of believing, according to the moral law, to be under the check and controul of a lawless fancy; as if not only there could be any proper harmony, fellowship, or lawful communion between that which is without law, and that which is under the law; but also, as if faith and reason were as much under the government of fancy and imagination, as these ought to be under the government of faith and reason,

though

though the former is properly under no moral government at all. At this rate it were better to be a beast than a man; because it is better to have sense and fancy without reason to govern it, than to have reason under the government of sense and fancy. But as the moral law that man is under, cannot allow that his reason be under the management of his sense and fancy, far less does it allow that faith be under it, or that fancy have a negative upon faith, so as it cannot act without it. Therefore, though, during the union of soul and body, faith is still troubled with fancy, as an *ill neighbour*, and cannot be without it in that sense; yet it can and must be without it as a manager; otherwise it makes a quick metamorphosis; turns the man to a beast, and takes the management out of the hand of faith and reason both. Hence what men *know* only *naturally as brute beasts*, by sense and fancy, without faith and reason, *in these things do they corrupt themselves*, Jude vers. 10. And hence in scripture also beasts are preferred to men, the ox and the ass, to people that do not know rationally, nor consider matters spiritually, *Isa.* i. 3.

This reasoning is so far from being nicely metaphysical, that no distinction is more natural and necessary, nor more ordinarily made use of in polemick divinity. See *Wollebii compendium, p.* 34. *Turretini institutiones theologiæ, tom.* I. *p.* 530. *Marckii medulla, p.* 128. Where, (proving that the soul of man is in each one created immediately of God, from *Eccl.* xii. 7. *Zech.* xii. 1. *Heb.* xii. 9. and from the indivisibility and incorporeal nature of the human soul,) when adversaries alledge, the soul is procreated by the parents, and object, That *a man begets a whole man*; it is answered, True; *but not the whole of a man:* Even as it is said, One kills a man, when yet it is only the body he can kill, *Matth.* x. 28. We say truly a person is killed, when yet it is plain, we cannot mean the whole of the person, because the soul is not killed. Thus, when a man is begotten or born, it cannot, without absurdity, be meant of the whole of that man, because the soul cannot properly be begotten or born. To apply this to the mysterious incarnation of Christ, when it is said, *Isa.* ix. 6. *To us a child is born,—Whose name is, The Mighty God,* we are to understand it of the θεάνθρωπος, his whole person God-man: But it could not, without blasphemy, be meant or said of the whole of that person, *viz.* the divine nature, that it was born. Thus, on the other hand, the object of faith and worship is that glorious θεάνθρωπος, the person God-man,

as and becauſe he is God †: But it cannot be ſaid, without blaſphemy and idolatry, that the whole of that perſon, *viz.* the human nature, or Chriſt as man, is the object of faith and worſhip. When Mr. *Robe* aſſerts or ſuppoſes this, he draws the charge of blaſphemy upon his own head, inſtead of mine; and knows not, (when he argues from the whole of faith's object to a part, while yet no part here, but the whole is the object of it,) that his argument is a mere fallacy.

I might further have ſhewn how Mr. *Robe*'s concluſion, That we cannot believe in Chriſt as God-man in one perſon, without the imaginary idea of him as man, being drawn from faith to ſenſe, from a ſupernatural to a natural and corporeal object, is quite informal and invalid. But, from what I have ſaid already, it appears, that his argument tranſgreſſes all the rules of philoſophy ‡; and that his concluſion is ſo far from being a truth, that it is a plain falſhood, a ſophiſtical and deluſive expreſſion, ſuited only to the deluſive and imaginary work it was intended or adduced to ſupport.

Upon the whole, let the reader therefore carefully diſtinguiſh between theſe two: (1.) A religious, rational, believing knowledge of Chriſt's human nature in the *underſtanding*, as it is a truth, that he is man, as well as God; and, (2.) An imaginary, ideal, notional knowledge of it in the fancy or imagination, as it *is* a corporeal thing, a repreſentation, or a figure and image of a man in the head. The firſt of theſe is lawful and abſolutely neceſſary; without which there can be no religious worſhip; becauſe the object of that knowledge is the man Chriſt; that is, the perſon who is God-man. The ſecond is unlawful and idolatrous, (being what Mr. *Robe* ſays and allows to be an image or ſpecies, repreſented to the underſtanding

† Our divines are ſo far from aſſerting, that Chriſt *as man* is the object of worſhip, that it is mightily diſputed among the moſt learned of them, whether Chriſt *as Mediator* is to be worſhipped, leſt, under that formality, he would neceſſarily be worſhipped *as man*; whereas he is the formal object of divine adoration only *as he is God*. This diſpute is the more accurately and cautiouſly ſuſtained by ſound divines, both in oppoſition to *Papiſts* and *Ubiquitarians*, who debate for the adoration of the fleſh or human nature of Chriſt; and alſo in oppoſition to *Socinians*, who deny that his divinity can be proven from his being the object of worſhip; in regard that, being worſhipped as Mediator, he is viewed as the intermediate, not the ſupreme and ultimate object. But as it is not my buſineſs at preſent to launch forth into this diſpute, ſo the learned reader that would ſee it treated at large, may conſult *Voetius's diſp. theol. p.* 529. *quæſt. An Chriſtus quà Mediator ſit adorandus?* and *Turretine's inſtit. theol. tom.* II. *p.* 539. upon the ſame queſtion.

‡ Qui volunt contra principia diſputare, produnt ſuam inſcitiam. *Maccovii centuria. p.* 170.

derstanding by the imagination;) and what ought to be shunned and avoided like the devil; and that because it is an imaginary idea of Christ as man; in which respect he is neither God, nor a person, nor the object of faith and worship, but a mere image and idol in the head.

Before I close this chapter, I shall to these philosophical arguments subjoin a scriptural one, for shewing the falsehood of these or the like assertions, That we cannot think of, or believe in Christ as God-man without the help of an imaginary idea of him as man; or that we can have no right thought of Christ without the help of our outward senses or inward imagination viewing an outward or corporeal object.

However external and corporeal objects presented to the mind by the senses or imaginations may give *occasion* to rational thoughts or spiritual meditations; yet they cannot properly help a man either to a good thought or an evil one; because the spring of all good thoughts or evil is from within, and not from without. And for this I produce the doctrine of Christ, *Matth.* xii. 35. and xv. 19. *Mark.* vii. 21, 22, 23. The rise and spring of good thoughts is from the good Spirit of God, the well of water in believers springing up to everlasting life, or the new supernatural principle: For, says Christ, *a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.* The rise and spring of evil and sinful thoughts is also from within, and not from without: For, says Christ, *an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things. Nothing from without defiles a man,* as eating with *unwashen hands*, and the like; but from within, namely, his corrupt nature: *For out of the heart* † *proceedeth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications,——blasphemies;——yea and an evil eye.* Hence, by the by, to me it seems evident, that Christ's doctrine does not favour the vain philosophy which asserts, *That there is nothing in the mind or understanding* inwardly, *that is not first in the senses* outwardly, or conveyed thereto from without. For as rational

† This fountain of corrupt nature is usually in scripture called the *flesh*; and its opposite in those that are born again, the *Spirit*, *John* iii. 6. *In the flesh dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. vii. 18. Yea, from this corrupt fountain three great streams always issue, which in scripture come under these three names: (1.) Νοήματα, the *notions*, *thoughts* or cogitations of the flesh; which rise up against Christ and grace, and need to be *brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, by the weapons of warfare that are mighty through God*, 2 Cor. x. 4. 5. (2.) Θελήματα, the *wills* of the flesh, *Eph.* ii. 3. translated there the *desires* of the flesh and of the mind. (3.) Παθήματα, the *passions* of the flesh, *Gal.* v. 24. translated there *the affections: They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

onal thoughts themselves, *naturally* considered, are not *properly*, though sometimes *occasionally*, from the outward senses, but from the rational soul itself; so thoughts *morally* considered, are good or evil, not from the outward senses, or the outward objects thereof, but from the good or evil treasure that is within the heart of man, *Mark* vii. 21. 23. Nothing from without would defile a man *with evil thoughts*, if he had not a fountain of corruption and pollution within, that defiles his outward senses, his eyes and ears; and makes them evil; so as first to let out the pollution *to the sense*, and then draw in more and more pollution *by them*, from outward objects. Hence also Christ says, *Luke* vi. 43. *A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

But, where the fountain within is clean, nothing from without can bring in so much as an evil thought. Thus it was with Christ, when tempted by the god of this world, temptations could do him no hurt so as to defile him. Hence *the prince of this world cometh*, says Christ; *but he hath nothing in me*; nothing corrupt within for any thing without to work upon. Thus, so far as the inward principle of grace in saints is prevalent, so far is *every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*; and their outward senses, as well as imaginations, and the outward objects thereof, are purified thereby: *For to the pure all things are pure*, Tit. i. 15.

Now, from hence it follows, that our corporeal sensitive faculties, namely, the external senses and internal imagination or fancy, terminating upon outward corporeal objects, are not the first or great and leading helps to the knowledge of God, or to any right thought of Christ. It is not from without, but from within, that evil thoughts proceed; and even so it is not from without, but from within, that good thoughts proceed. *Natural* and rational thoughts proceed naturally from the rational soul that is within. *Carnal* and sinful thoughts proceed from within; that is, from the same soul and heart as it is carnal and corrupt. *Spiritual* and good thoughts proceed also from within, namely, from the heart as it is a new heart, renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, or from the good treasure that is within the heart.

Outward objects then presented to the senses, could not so much as occasion an evil thought, if the heart within were not evil. It is this which defiles the man, even an inward evil nature, an active principle of wickedness there. And as little can outward objects presented to the senses outwardly, or to the imagination inwardly, occasion, far less properly help

unto

unto any right or spiritual thought of Christ, if the heart within be not right, and if there be not an internal active principle of grace ready to go forth, and bring in food suited to it, by sucking, like the bee, the honey of spiritual advantage from the flowers of outward objects; which presupposes a new spiritual instinct previously given of God; I mean the new heart and new nature, superadded to the natural faculties of the rational soul. Hence, from Christ's doctrine, it is plain, that neither outward senses, nor any imaginary idea of Christ as man, or of any outward corporeal object whatsoever, can give any help to a right thought of Christ, or to any spiritual view of him as God-man, Redeemer. May God himself send *real* help; for vain are all such *imaginary* helps.

CHAP. VIII.

I proposed, last of all, to offer some remarks upon several virulent passages in Mr. *Robe*'s pamphlet, especially relating to SCHISM, which he charges the Associate Presbytery with, and DEISM, which he seems unable to purge himself or his author from. And therefore I shall divide this chapter into two sections; the first, relating to the former branch; and the second to the latter.

SECT. I.

An examination of certain virulent passages in Mr. Robe's *letter, relating to* SCHISM, *which he charges the Associate Presbytery with.*

PAG. 73. Mr. *Robe* speaks again of 'the heresy which is advanced about the human nature of the glorious Redeemer, 'particularly by Mr. *Erskine* in terms, That IT IS NO PART 'OF THE OBJECT OF FAITH; and THAT IT PROFITETH NOTHING; which yet they [meaning his people, 'and the favourers of the late work he appears for] will not 'charge upon the Associate Presbytery, unless they do really, what they falsely accuse the church of *Scotland* of, tolerate, and not censure the erroneous, by their not calling 'Mr. *Erskine* to account for his heresy and blasphemy above 'mentioned.'

If I had not been able to prove, as I have done, that this poor man is grosly ignorant of the subject he writes upon, and of the very thing he lays to my charge, it would have been hard for me to have borne it. But, as I can easily see, that no

no person that knows the gospel, will find that Mr. *Robe* had the least foundation for it from my words, which made me to make no great haste in answering it; so I have more reason to pity the blindness, than to resent the calumny of such a writer, after the manner that Mr. *Robe* calls heresy and blasphemy. So have I written in defence of truth, That the human nature of Christ as it subsists in his divine person, is only the object of faith; and cannot be the object of any imaginary idea; and that to assert, it can and ought to be so, is a doctrine of lies and falshoods, of ignorant imagery and idolatry. No member of the Associate Presbytery was ever so blind as to see with Mr. *Robe*'s deluded eye, that there is any thing like heresy or blasphemy in the words wherein he pretends to find it; and, instead of censuring Mr. *Erskine*, they are disposed to warn all that would be saved from delusion and damnation, to beware of falling down to Mr. *Robe*'s golden image, that he hath set up instead of the true Christ. But, before I say more upon this passage, it is not amiss the reader notice his words that follow, namely, 'These dear 'people look upon your testimony as *protestatio contra factam*: For they see that you have rebelled, and proven 'stubborn to the discipline and government Christ hath instituted in his church, to the bringing the dreadful guilt of 'perjury upon your souls; and that you have done more to 'overturn the doctrine, worship, discipline and government 'Christ hath instituted in his house, than all the enemies 'have been since our happy revolution. They observe, those 'who have been most zealous for your testimony, are far 'from being better Christians since they became such; yea, 'that they grow only in wrath, spite, envy, evil-speaking and 'lying, and much self-conceit. They know the most of your 'zealous followers, who have, without finding any bones 'in it, approven it, have never read it; or, if they have, 'cannot understand it. They have seen them put it in the place 'of their Bibles, and good books they were formerly conversant with. Some of them see, that it contains several 'gross lies, as the Reverend Mr. *Currie* hath proven. And, 'finally, as to the way of witnessing you require of such as 'them, by withdrawing from the Lord's ordinances, to which 'they formerly resorted, and in the use of which they profited, and by engaging never more to hear Ministers of 'the Church of *Scotland*; they can see no more needful to 'qualify people for giving this approbation of your testimony, but laziness, gross profanity, and contempt of ordinances. They cannot think, the Lord calls them to that

'which

'which any profane man, as he is profane, and because he 'is profane, can do: And it is what they see several pro- 'fane persons, filled with a spirit of spite and revenge a- 'gainst their Ministers, do. These are some of the grounds 'of their rooted prejudice against your schismatical and irre- 'gular *testimony*. I leave it to others to judge the relevan- 'cy of them.'

Answer. It is one thing to forge a libel, that may be thought relevant, and another thing to prove the facts. Mr. *Robe* is acquainted with the trade of libelling. No doubt heresy and blasphemy, for which he libelled me in that pamphlet, are relevant enough to infer the highest censure. But, instead of proving the facts, he hath but proven himself a false accuser of the brethren, and an ignorant idolater, by native consequence from his doctrine. His bare word therefore cannot be taken for proof, by any impartial judge. To my certain knowledge, he has here heaped up a number of gross falshoods, as to the bulk and body of those that are in formal accession to us. How it may stand with some that chuse to be our hearers, and attend our meetings for worship, but are not formally under our inspection, we cannot be supposed to know. But as to the generality of those that are judicially received by us, they are well known to be a number of the most judicious, knowing, sober, serious, pious and praying people in *Scotland*. However, these people, and we as upon their heads, are strangely attacked in the passage above cited.

I appeal to all readers of it, if here be not a pen dipped in the gall of bitterness? Is there any thing here like a gospel-spirit, or any way savouring of the meek Spirit of Jesus Christ? But rather has it not the smell of a bitter, malicious, ignorant and erroneous spirit? I have little hope that the judicatures whereof Mr. *Robe* is a member, will censure him for his erroneous and idolatrous doctrine, of which his book is so full. But, as I remember of a worthy and great divine, Mr. *James Brisbane* Minister at *Stirling*, after the *representation* given in against the act of Assembly 1720, (condemning *The Marrow of modern divinity,*) by twelve Ministers, of whom I was honoured of God to be one, and when the act 1722 on that point was a-passing, he openly asserted, That he could evince, there was not so many errors in that book, as in their acts condemning it: So, if the Ministers and judicatures of the established church shall tolerate, and not censure the many gross errors and abominations that are in this and other performances of Mr. *Robe*, it will add to the many

ny great and weighty grounds and reasons for secession that have been already laid open, to the conviction of all true-hearted Presbyterians in *Scotland*, that dare not make a secession from their true covenanted mother-*church of Scotland*, and that dare not baptize the backsliding judicatures with any such *blazing name*: with which many are blinded and frighted from accession to us, as if they would thereby be guilty of a criminal and schismatical separation from the church of *Scotland*; which are no better than big words to terrify the ignorant, who do not know, that we never to this day separated from our mother-church, but have openly cleaved to her, and only have made a secession from these judicatures, because they have left her, and judicially testified against them for doing so. Yet, for our doing this, Mr. *Robe* retorts upon us the charge of perjury; but with as much judgment and reason, as he laid against me the charge of heresy and blasphemy.

With equal zeal and judgment does he assert, *p.* 87. 'That 'we are just such enemies to Presbyterian Church-government 'as *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* were to the government 'God set over the church and state of the *Jews*.' Which words of spite and venom, delivered without any shadow of reason or argument, and with such a dogmatical air, when I read them, they brought to mind the answer of that question, *Psal.* cxx. 3, 4. of which I pray Mr. *Robe* may have such a *fear*, as never to have *a share, What shall be given unto thee? Or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.* But, if God hath bid this *Shimei* rail upon us, I doubt not but it is wisdom to let him alone, in some respects. And therefore, though I cannot condemn the silence of some of my brethren that fall in with that advice of Wisdom, *Prov.* xxvi. 4. *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him*; yet I hope they will as little condemn me, (unless I were to give railing for railing,) because I have endeavoured also to fall in with the call of Wisdom, vers. 5. *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.* There are some that make their folly evident to all men; and whether Mr. *Robe* hath done so or not, I shall leave it to others to judge.

It may seem strange, that he is so kind as to say, *p.* 85. 'For once I'll own to you frankly, that I am for the govern-'ment's tolerating you and your party;' and yet that he should think, 'we are just such enemies to Presbyterial church-govern-'ment, as *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* were to the govern-

'ment

'ment God then set over the church and state of the *Jews.*' These two expressions compared, may make one think how much it is our advantage, that, notwithstanding the view he has of our rebellious practices against church and state, yet the power of his prejudices against us is at least *for once* overcome by the power of his toleration-principles. I am persuaded, that many in the establishment, even of those that make a tool of him now, are more wise and learned, than to reckon him a competent judge in matters either of the doctrine or government of the church of Christ.

I was once an ear-witness, at the General Assembly of this established church, to the speech of a certain member thereof, wherein, relating to our covenanted reformation, he asserted openly, that they *were not now standing upon that foundation.* It grieved me much that he was not contradicted. Whence I concluded, that it was taken for granted by that court, that they were indeed quite off from that foundation; though yet I knew, that some in the church, particularly the *Presbytery of Dunfermline at that time,* who took me engaged otherwise, were of contrary sentiments. However, after that time, I took all opportunities to shew my mind in a suitableness to my solemn engagements, not only by joining in all open *dissents, testimonies* and *protestations* against the course and current of defection in this land, that were offered in a way of communion with the judicatures; but afterward, whenever an open testimony for our covenanted reformation was judicially lifted up in a way of secession from these declining courts, I found it my duty to cleave to that honest part of the church that were cleaving to her reformation-principles, and to secede from these judicatures, that were making still more and more an open and avowed secession from their mother-church of *Scotland:* And then took the first opportunity of joining with my brethren lately in the renovation of our Solemn Covenants, and declaring to this and the rising generation, that we were desirous to witness against the defections, perjury and apostasy of the times; which hath still been growing to a greater and greater height, especially within these thirty years bygone. And as I desire to bless the Lord that gave me counsel, so I cannot but wonder at the unaccountable insolence and confidence of any that speak at the rate in which Mr. *Robe* takes upon him here to do. I can ascribe it to nothing, but either (1.) His dreadful ignorance even of the very present state of the corrupt courts and judicatures, which he extolls under the great and glaring, yet fraudulent and fallacious name of the *church of Scotland*; as if those who alone are judicially asserting all her covenan-

ted principles, were by no means to be reckoned any part of that church, because they make at present no part of these judicatures that are, upon the matter, and have been, razing her to the foundation. Or, (2.) I must ascribe it to his being judicially given up of God to delusive dreams, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, so as to be proof against all conviction of the present sins, errors and corruptions, that he ought to testify against; and so as to be tormented with the *testimony* we give against them, and reckon no evil now so great as that testimony, and no enemies to the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the church, so great, as those that are appearing to support and maintain the same. If ever God open this angry brother's eyes in time, his bitter raillery will be matter of deep humiliation to him. Posterity will indeed be better judges between the present judicatures and us, than the present generation, that is filled with such prejudices against our appearances. But, as Mr. *Robe* hath little reason to boast of his own performances, or attachments to the *doctrine* of the church of *Scotland*, wherein he hath given evidence of very great ignorance; so he hath no great reason to boast of some other writers on his side, whom he reckons champions for his cause, and against us: For though some of them have been longer than myself in the ministry; yet, if I were put to it, I could easily make it evident, from some of their writings, that they never to this day understood clearly some of the most noble branches of the fundamental doctrine of the glorious gospel, that have been corrupted by the present judicatures within these thirty years, and to which their discipline and government ought to have been a *fence*, if these also had not been miserably corrupted and misapplied. However, Mr. *Robe*, if God continue to desert and leave him to himself, may and will go on in railing at and calumniating the work of God among our hands; which yet, I am perswaded, will prove a burdensome stone to all that burden themselves with it, and gather together against it.

I have good reason to think there are many Ministers yet in the present establishment in *Scotland* that see themselves but affronted, instead of being dextrously defended, by those that are writers just now in their favours. Some, it is like, can look over the former faults of *Jus populi*, when these, by the same hand, are made amends for, by voluminous atonements, that may be intitled *Jus Clerici*. Others, it is probable, can wink at what they know to be delusive and erroneous in such a performance as this of Mr. *Robe*'s, while it serves a turn, to support the credit of their darling establishment, and

to run down that witnessing work among our hands, which tends to discover and expose the iniquity that therein is established by a law. And however many profess to join with us that may be naughty hypocrites, from whom Mr. *Robe* takes advantage against us and our cause so unjustly; yet all the Lord's remnant in this and the rising generation will be ready to observe how much the words of the Prophet are applicable to our time, *Mal.* ii. 7, 8, 9, 10. *For the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: For he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way: Ye have caused many to stumble at the law: Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*

Sect. II.

Concerning Deism, *which Mr.* Robe *seems unable to purge himself and Mr.* Edwards *from.*

Mr. *Robe, p.* 64, 65, 66. charges me with malice and murder for the note I had about some expressions, in the end of his *Second letter to* Mr. *Fisher*, concerning the scripture. Whether they were the words of Dr. *Cooper* or Mr. *Edwards*, it is no matter. The more learned and worthy any is reckoned to be, and the more free any are of a Deistical spirit, the more blameable are they, if their expressions anent the scripture seem any way to favour of it. However, Mr. *Robe* adopts the same way of speaking; which I shall prove to favour of that spirit, whether Mr. *Robe* be of it or not. I have no other ground on which to judge of mens principles but their words. If they deny the charge that their words bear, they ought to avoid, or caution better the words that bear it. The words are such as have a great seeming regard paid therein to the scripture, namely, *This is the great and standing rule that God hath given to his church, to guide them in all things relating to the great concerns of their souls; and it is an infallible and sufficient rule* †. These indeed are the expressions that I reckoned, however sound and orthodox in themselves,

† Edwards's *distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God*, Edinb. edit. p. 19.

yet such as the refined DEISTS of our day will subscribe unto; because the word of God is not here called the *only rule*, to guide us in all things relating to the great concerns of our souls, or to direct us how to glorify God and enjoy him. This neglect indeed might have been looked over without any suspicion, were it not at this day; wherein DEISTS have given the same, or the like lofty epithets to the scripture that are here given, but yet cannot call it the *only rule*. Why, but says Mr. *Robe*, 'Did ever any Deist, or person savouring of a Deistical spirit, say this, [namely, that the scripture 'is the great, standing, infallible, sufficient rule? Is not the 'doctrine here asserted eversive of *Deism*, and in flat contradiction to it? [And then a publick challenge follows.] 'I here call publickly upon Mr. *Erskine* to prove, that these 'propositions savour of a Deistical spirit, or be reputed further a slanderer and false accuser of the brethren.'

Answer. It was quite needless for Mr. *Robe* here *projicere ampullas & sesquipedalia verba*, to act the boaster with such great swelling words: For what he calls me to prove, is already proven to my hand, by two famous divines in *England*; whose words I shall here cite as far as needful to the present purpose. I can scarce allow myself to think, that Mr. *Robe* or Mr. *Edwards* either are entire strangers to the late catechism published under the title of, *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised, and rendered fitter for general use*; wherein many alterations are made in the Assembly's Catechism, directly cross to the Assembly's sense, subversive of many precious truths, and making an open door to many pernicious errors that abound in this age. This little performance made such a great noise, almost but ten years ago, that it was animadverted upon by a Commission of the General Assembly of this established church of *Scotland*, *anno* 1735, and especially by the two foresaid Reverend Ministers at *London*, in their judicious remarks upon it; insomuch that to suppose Mr. *Robe* in *Scotland*, or even Mr. *Edwards* in *America*, were utter strangers to that story, would be a slash upon their intelligence. They cannot therefore but know, that the author of that catechism discovered his Deistical spirit and principles, even under such titles given to the scripture, as here Mr. *Robe* reckons it absurd to suppose they savour of DEISM; while yet the title of its being the *only* rule in the case mentioned is neglected and omitted.

One little treatise is said to be written by Dr. *John Guise*, intitled, *Remarks on a Catechism published under the title of, The Assembly's shorter catechism revised*, &c. p. 23.

Assembly's,

Assembly's, Q. 2. Answer.

The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only *rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.*

Revisal, Q. 2. Answer.

The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is not only a sufficient, but the principal *rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.*

The remark is as follows.

'This alteration sinks the Assembly's sense with respect to 'the ancient Protestant doctrine of the perfection of the 'scripture, as the *only* rule of faith and practice to Christians, 'and leaves room for a thought, as if there were some other 'sufficient rule, even to us, of glorifying and enjoying God; 'but does not name what that rule is; whether it is NATURAL 'REASON or *tradition*, or the opinion of the fathers, or the '*decrees of councils* or *of Popes*.'

Upon the above alteration and remark it may be observed, that the reviser makes the word of God, not only the *sufficient*, but the *principal* rule to direct, as above; and consequently says as much in a few words, as Mr. *Robe* and his author do in many: For to call it a *sufficient* rule, is equal to the calling it a *great*, *standing*, and *infallible* one; for it could not be sufficient, if it were either a falling or a fallible rule. Yea, the DEISTICAL catechism allows it to be more than a *sufficient* rule, that is, not only a sufficient, but the *principal* rule: In room of which, no doubt, the *reviser* would allow it to be called the *great* rule, as Mr. *Robe*'s author does; because room is left for a thought, as the remarker says, as if there were some other sufficient rule, even to us, or that God hath given to his church, of glorifying and enjoying him; and that the word of God is the great and principal, though not the *only* rule.

But, for further proof that this omission favours of DEISM, another treatise on the same head, said to be written by the Reverend Mr. *Abraham Taylor*, is intitled, *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism rescued from the late reviser and vindicator*. P. 2. The author hath these words upon this same question, as altered by the reviser, namely, 'This is not only the *foundation*, but also the very *essence* of DEISM. And we all know 'what use the DEISTS have made of this odious principle, '*That* REASON *is a sufficient rule for sinners*.' The author goes on, to excellent purpose, in shewing the insufficiency of natural reason, as a rule, to lead sinners in the way of salvation; and that the word of God is the *only* rule for this end, *p.* 3, 4. *&c.* In *p.* 3. he hath these words, 'Let him not [namely,

'[namely, the *reviser*] presume to say, that he consulted the 'reputation of the scriptures, when he allows them to be not 'only a sufficient, but the principal rule; because there is not 'a DEIST in the nation but may frankly *grant* the same.' Even, so say I, Let not Mr. *Robe* think, that he consulted the reputation of the scriptures, even when he allows them to be the great, and standing, and infallible, and sufficient rule; because (for what I know) there is not a DEIST in the nation but may frankly grant the same, providing he be not urged to grant, that it is the *only* rule, but be allowed to suppose that there is some other standing and sufficient rule also; though yet he will own the word to have the pre-eminence, as the great, the principal one. Mr. *Robe* affirms, *p.* 66. 'That, 'when his author asserts the word to be the great, standing, 'infallible, and sufficient rule, he *asserts it to be the only rule*; '*and that no other is needed.*' The author indeed may be, and I hope is of that opinion Mr. *Robe* speaks of, that the scripture is the *only* rule; but his words do not assert what Mr. *Robe* says they do. And he hath but a weak defender that would support him, by saying, *No other is needed, seeing it is infallible, sufficient, and standing*; for so much will the DEISTS own, that *no other is needed*: But then, if it be allowed to them, that the word is not the *only rule*, and that natural reason is a *sufficient* one, then they can say, as well as Mr. *Robe, that no other is needed*; and consequently, that the word of God and revelation is *needless*.

The same weakness, if not wickedness, is expressed by Mr. *Robe* when he supposes, 'I might as solidly argue against our 'confession of faith, and him for approving it, as favouring 'of a Deistical spirit, because it does not use the word *only*. 'Confess. chap. I. parag. 2. *All which are given by inspira-'tion of God, to be the rule of faith and life.*' Hence he questions, 'Did these compilers, and the signers and approvers of it since, favour of a Deistical spirit? Had they principles tending to the disparagement of the word of God, 'because they used not the word *only* here? And is there a-'ny reason to argue, on this account, against Mr. *Edwards*, 'who gives more notable epithets to the scripture as a rule, 'than the *Confession* does in that paragraph?' Alas! how palpable is the design of Mr. *Robe* here to impose upon his reader? He knows, that in that paragraph the Assembly give no epithets at all to that rule of faith and life, because in the following paragraph they were to enlarge upon them at another rate, than Mr. *Robe* or his author doth: For they shew in the same chapter, that the word of God is not only the *only* rule,

rule, as making a full discovery of the only way of man's salvation, but also speak of 'the incomparable excellencies 'and the entire perfection of the scripture, the infallible truth, 'and divine authority thereof, and how the whole counsel of 'God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's 'salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down there, 'or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced 'therefrom: Unto which nothing at any time is to be added, 'whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or tradition of men: 'That the infallible rule of the interpretation of scripture, is 'the scripture itself, &c. That the supreme judge, by which all 'controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees 'of councils, opinions of ancient writings, doctrines of men, 'and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose 'sentence we are to rest, *can be no other* but the Holy Spirit 'speaking in scripture.' Compare these words with the first paragraph of that chapter, where it is said, 'That the light of 'nature, and the works of creation, are not sufficient to give 'us that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.' Where the Assembly evidently prove the scriptures to be the *only* rule. And what they here prove, they assert in both Catechisms; in the second and third questions of the Larger Catechism, 'That the light of nature in 'man, and the works of God, declare plainly, that there is 'a God; but his word and Spirit *only* do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation: And, that 'the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the 'word of God, the *only* rule of faith and obedience;' and in the Shorter Catechism, That this 'word of God is the *only* 'rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God.' Let the reader judge, if Mr. *Robe*, or his author, hath given more noble epithets to the scripture as a rule, than the Confession of faith does in that chapter foresaid? And will it palliate the deceit and prevarication, that he cites the paragraph only which speaks of the rule in general, and looks over the relation it hath to what goes before and follows?

It is plain enough, that too many signers and professed approvers of the above *Confession*, who make it rather a bond of union, than a test of orthodoxy, as in *England* they do with their *Thirty nine Articles*, are giving evidence of too little regard to the scripture; especially when the most noble epithets they give it, are no other than what DEISTS will subscribe unto. Why should they be averse from calling the word of God the *only* rule to lead sinners in the way of salvation, at a time when DEISTS are seeking to expunge this

title

title out of our ſtandards? And, when ſome of our friends in *England* are ſetting themſelves for the defence of truth in this matter, as I have ſhewed, is it time for us to let it fall to the ground? I think no divine, eſpecially in *Scotland*, that pretends to orthodoxy on this point, if he have the leaſt knowledge of the hiſtory of the times, and particularly the hiſtory I have juſt now related as above, can be reckoned excuſable, as not favouring or favouring of a DEISTICAL ſpirit, if he ſeems to extol the ſcripture as the rule, with lofty epithets, which DEISTS may grant; and yet neglect that epithet which effectually tends to cut off DEISM.

Before I leave this ſubject, I cannot paſs the remarkable way in which Mr. *Robe* endeavours to retort and contradict my words, wherein I found fault with the epithets given to the word of God, as a rule, and yet omitting this of its being the *only* rule, according to our good old way of ſpeaking in the foreſaid Catechiſm. Upon which his obſerve, by way of retortion, *p.* 65. is, 'Now, Reader, doth not this poor 'malicious ſtuff deſerve to be expoſed?' And then he falls on expoſing it in the following manner. 'Firſt then, [ſays he,] 'this proves Mr. *Erskine* himſelf to favour of a Deiſtical ſpi- 'rit, to turn his words upon himſelf. Mr. *Erskine* doth not 'ſay, in the good old way of ſpeaking, the ſcripture is the 'only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God 'for ever; he leaves out the word of our Shorter Catechiſm 'for ever. Now, let us argue as he doth. It would ſeem 'any notable epithet may be given it, providing it be not ſaid 'to be the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy 'God *for ever*. This good old way of ſpeaking with reſpect 'to the ancient Chriſtian doctrine of a future ſtate, and the 'everlaſting enjoyment of God therein, and the uſefulneſs of 'the ſcripture to direct us to this, whatever uſe it may have 'for this life, ſeems to be going out of faſhion, *&c.*'

This he thinks is enough to expoſe the weakneſs and malice of Mr. *Erskine*'s reaſoning here. Now, were it not for the ſake of thoſe that are weak and inconſiderate, I would never be at pains to anſwer this retortion of Mr. *Robe*'s; which no man of common ſenſe can read, without ſeeing his groſs ignorance and childiſh babbles, and how his wrath and paſſion, which appears in the paſſionate bitter expreſſions with which he begins to retort my words upon me, hath plunged him into the mire of groſs error and abſurdity. He challenges me for leaving out a word of our Shorter Catechiſm, that never was in it; and, if it had been in it, it would neither have been ſenſe nor truth. If a boy of five or ſix years of age had

had said to me what Mr. *Robe* hath here written, I would have bid him learn to repeat better the first two questions of his Catechism; and not to confound *man's chief end*, which will be his chief end *for ever*, with the *only rule God hath given us* for attaining this chief end, namely, his written word: Which I doubt if ever any, except Mr. *Robe*, did suppose was to be man's *rule for ever*. It may well be supposed, that no written books nor Bibles will remain unconsumed after the flaming fire and general conflagration of the great day; and that the church triumphant in the other world will stand in no need of the scripture, or writings of the Old and New Testament, nor of such ordinances as now the church militant on earth does: For it is said of the *new Jerusalem* above, *Rev.* xxi. 22, 23. *I saw no temple therein: For the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.* And again, *The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* For Mr. *Robe* to father this upon our Shorter Catechism, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as they are now, so they will be the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God *for ever*, is to father a lie upon the famous Assembly of divines that framed it, and make them say what they never said about a future state. They were wiser than to speak any thing thereanent, above that which is written. They spoke of a rule to direct men in this world to everlasting salvation in the next; but not of a rule through eternity, when that salvation is completed. And therefore neither in the question, nor in the answer, do they repeat the words *for ever*; which relates only to man's chief end and chief happiness, spoken of in the first question. Mr. *Robe*, then, in endeavouring to expose me, hath but exposed himself, and his own ignorance and error; or else his wrath and passion, which hath blinded him, according to that of the poet,

Impedit ira animum, ne possit cernere verum;

or rather according to that of the Apostle *James*, chap. i. 20. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God:* Nay, it works opposition to it, and to the truth of God.

In the close of this paragraph, Mr. *Robe* says, *p.* 66. he quoted this passage relating to the scripture being the great, standing, infallible and sufficient rule to guide us in all the concerns of our souls, "to shew, that Mr. *Edwards*'s sermon had no tendency to promote enthusiasm; —— *seeing* "*it refers, in so strong terms,* —— *to the word of God*, &c." But I must say, if the word had been made the *only* rule, the terms would have been yet stronger, so as to have excluded other rules that men make so to themselves, beside the word of God. Is it possible, that Mr. *Robe* and his au-

thor did not know, that *Quakers* and *Enthusiasts* make not the word, but the spirit and light within them, their great, standing, infallible and sufficient rule; that the church of *Rome* pretends to *infallibility* in her decrees, and articles of faith, even without and beside the scripture, and in her unwritten traditions, as of equal authority and infallibility with the scripture as the rule; and that DEISTS, and others who would explode the necessity of revelation, make the law and light of nature, and natural reason, a standing, infallible and sufficient rule; insomuch that, if men will but walk according to it, there is *no need of any other*; they will *infallibly* be saved? If any then that pretend to orthodoxy in this matter, continue to omit this property of the scripture, its being the *only* rule to direct us in the great concerns of eternal salvation, I suppose they will give more and more ground to suspect their favouring of DEISTICAL and Enthusiastical principles too. Those that deny the charge, have no more ado but assert the principle, That they own the word of God contained in the scripture of the Old and New Testament, to be the *only* rule. And this Mr. *Robe* himself hath not yet fairly done; but only by supposing, that the foresaid epithets import it; and that, whatever use it may have for this life, it is the only rule to direct *us for ever*; that is, (it seems,) in the life to come. I hope every intelligent reader will see, that I am taking no advantage against him, beyond what his own words natively bear in them.

I might add, that as my opponent has not been able to clear himself or his author from the charge which I but feared their words laid them open to, so his own words, *p.* 55. and elsewhere in his *Letter*, seem to express a DEISTICAL principle, whether he be aware of it himself, yea or not, *viz.* when he says, He can never believe what he has no knowledge or conception of, even by an imaginary idea, (when the object of faith is supposed to be Christ as man, as well as God). It is true, there is such a knowing and seeing prerequisite to faith, as is imported in these scriptures, *Psal.* ix. 10. *John* vi. 40. spoke of elsewhere. But then, this is a sight and knowledge, that carries in it an acknowledgement, that what is thus seen and known, is neither visible nor knowable; or what is thus conceived and perceived, is unconceivable and imperceptible either by corporeal organs or natural understanding; and that therefore, since it cannot be the object of sense, fancy, yea or natural knowledge, it must necessarily be the object only of faith grounded upon a divine testimony. To assert otherwise, that we are

not

not to believe what we cannot know or conceive, speaks out either darkness or DEISM unawares. A learned treatise published about ten years ago, intitled, *Some thoughts concerning religion, natural and revealed,* &c. *p.* 60. *edit. Edinb.* 1743. has these words, "The whole of the DEIST's scheme is, as "he imagines, built upon REASON; and, so far as right rea-"son goes, the CHRISTIAN agrees with him: But the differ-"ence between them is this, The DEIST maintains, that no-"thing is to be admitted but what he can assign a proper "reason for, or, in other words, what falls in with the ideas "which he hath, or hath made for himself: Whereas the *humble* "CHRISTIAN believes that there are things of which he neither "hath, nor can have adequate ideas, *&c.*" Now, if this be justly said of such *Rationalists* as will believe nothing but what they can fathom by reason, what may be thought of such *Imaginationists*, that cannot believe what they have no knowledge or conception of by an imaginary idea?

Mr. *Robe* hath frequently magnified natural senses and imagination as great helps, even to the saving knowledge of God; and how much more he would incline to magnify *natural reason*, I do not know. Certainly he must own this to be a much greater help. I shall not say, he will call it a sufficient rule, as DEISTS do: But it seems suspicious, that he hath no such due regard to the scripture as he professes, when he so bitterly resents my quarrelling any expressions (in point of omission) that give not that rule its due. But, in opposition to Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine relating to the helpfulness of imaginary ideas, I maintain, that the word of God (accompanied with the Spirit) is the *only* great help to the saving knowledge of God; and that this word is the *only* rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

So far I have thought fit to answer Mr. *Robe*'s publick call to prove that these propositions above mentioned, together with the foresaid omission, favour of a DEISTICAL spirit. And I hope I shall not be reputed a slanderer or false accuser of the brethren, till Mr. *Robe* shall answer these judicious divines in *England*, whom I have adduced, together with our Confession of faith and Catechisms, grounded on the word of God, to prove this point. And, if these Reverend brethren in our neighbouring nation be reputed slanderers and accusers of the brethren, for shewing that excellent epithets given to the scripture as a rule, and yet not owning it as the *only* rule, favours rank of DEISM; then I am content to suffer reproach with them, or rather with our glorious master Christ, who was also called the *devil* under another name; knowing, that none will once attempt to espouse his cause without bearing his reproach.

Mr.

Mr. *Robe* hath evidently involved himself in the guilt of all the publick defections and corruptions that we testify against in our present appearance for the covenanted reformation-principles, and against the apostasy of the times; by declaring, *p.* 27. That these *errors* and *defections we* complain of, *are no where to be found.* And this he declares in as bitter and railing language as a man can well utter. His words are, 'The principal support of your schism is by calumnies, slander 'and misrepresentation, and making a noise in several cases, 'about errors and corruptions, which are no where to be 'found, but in your own brains and books.' What sort of a language this is, and how suitable to one that would be accounted a grave Minister of Christ, let the world judge. But, as to the matter itself, I would ask, If there be no error, no corruption in the church now to be found, what has become of all these errors, defections and corruptions which more than fifty Ministers, together with some of us, while we were yet in the judicatures, complained of to the General Assembly *anno* 1732, and which we, and some of themselves, have been these thirty years giving in representations, dissents, and protests against; till we found ourselves necessitated to withdraw from their communion, who refused to be reformed, or so much as to hear our petitions for reformation? Are all these errors and corruptions now quite abolished, and no where to be found, but in our brains and books? Surely it was never the Spirit of Christ that dictated such falshood and raillery. Mr. *Robe* may think himself sufficiently cautious, by having said, *in several cases* only he thus accuses us. Indeed he seems, by interjecting words of that sort many times, to palliate his enmity at the whole of our witnessing work, and to make shifts for blinding his conscience, and salving his credit; which he may easily see would suffer, if he made no exception at all. However, if it be the same spirit that actuates the subjects of that applauded work, that I see actuates this eminent promoter of it, I have full freedom to beg of God, that all his people may be delivered from that spirit. Mr. *Robe* is pleased to call that our schism, which was a necessary separation, founded upon reasons, both in our *testimony* and *declinature,* which are open to the world, and which Mr. *Robe* should have answered before he could have judiciously called it a *schism.* But this would have been too hard work for him, or any man else. It was easier for him to say, that the principal support of our *schism* (which is no reason at all) is nothing but calumny, slander and misrepresentation, and needless noise about error and corruption, which are no where to be found, but in our own brains and books. What is

in

in our books, the impartial world are judges; though I must own, I scarce think Mr. *Robe* a competent judge, whether truth or error be in our books; when I find him, in his *letter*, loading, I think I may say, the soundest divinity with the heavy charge of error and blasphemy; and also corrupting the minds of the simple, though I hope not designedly, but unawares, so as to lead them to the most subtil idolatry. As to error and corruption, which Mr. *Robe* says are to be found in our *brains*, and no where else, but there, and in our books; I fear I would trespass against the rule of Ministerial gravity, as much as Mr. *Robe*, if I should hence infer, that, when he searched *brains*, as well as *books*, at once, it could be done no other way, than by the darling help of his own imaginary ideas. But I close, by noticing,

P. 28. Mr. *Robe* hopes, 'by the Lord's assistance, to make 'evident my perverting of scripture, wresting his words, 'false reasoning, fraud and falshood, from *p.* 48. to 53. of 'my *Appendix* to my *letter* (in its former edition.)' But, if it is proven, that it was not possible for him to make any of these evident, then it appears, that as he hath not had the Lord's assistance in this work; so it was but a profaning of the Lord's name to expect his assistance in fighting against his truth: For *no weapon formed* against it *shall prosper*, nor, *the gates of hell prevail*.

Dunfermline, Nov. 1. 1744.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHETHER my opponent shall give a return to this book, I know not; only I know it is easy to answer a whole treatise with a few words of wind, by giving it some ill-natured names, and treating it as a heap of trash; even as this, though designed as an antidote against vain imaginations, may be judged by some to be at best but a volume or mass of metaphysicks, and a system of airy speculations. But, if such return should be given, as would fairly answer reason with reason, and argument with argument, it will deserve to be considered; whereas a rattle of words, evidently tending to bewray the weakness or wickedness of the writer, or containing no better reasoning than I have found in the letter I have been obliged to remark upon, I design not to regard; nor would I think it worth my while to study self-vindication so far as to put the honour of an answer upon any bitter, railing, or reproachful harangue: For, since *the end of all things is at hand*, and *the day of the Lord* fast *approaching*, I hope it shall be no great pain to me to be despised and disparaged for a little while by some hands or pens, providing truth

truth be cleared and vindicated. Therefore, as I said in a former letter, *I resolve never to contend for the last word, but for the truth.*

Mean time, as I do not impute all and every one of the absurdities to my opponent himself, which I have found naturively deducible from his words; so I have not enlarged upon all these deductions, merely for his sake, or on his account, but especially for the sake of some young students of philosophy and divinity, to fortify them, in some measure, against part of the false and corrupt learning with which the books and schools of the present age are so much replenished. And therefore, though Mr. *Robe* may not reckon himself concerned with some of these particulars I have insisted upon, yet I have handled no subject in this treatise but what his letter gives me a fair occasion to discourse upon. I own, that the slow progress of the press, while retarded in the printing of this book, hath left part of it so long in my hand, as to occasion some additions from time to time; which has swelled it to a greater volume than I designed at first. But, if thereby it shall be rendered, through the divine blessing, the more useful, I shall adore the providence that made it for this end the more full.

There are two seemingly opposite, yet very reconcileable rules and advices given by the Apostle, relating to faulty and erring brethren, or persons we may have to deal with. One is, *to restore them with the spirit of meekness*, Gal. vi. 1. Another is, to *rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*, Tit. i. 13. Of which rules, with reference to what is above written, I shall say, that though the severity of my words toward my opponent can hardly exceed the severity of his charge against me; yet, if it be found, that, in my way of dealing with him, I have either failed of that *meekness of spirit* that is commended in the first of these rules, or exceeded that *sharpness of reproof* that is allowed in the last, I shall be so far from justifying any such irregular expressions, that I hope I shall be ready to condemn them as much as any of my readers can do; knowing my own aptness to err this way; (though I am not conscious to myself that I have done so here;) and knowing how hard a task it is, especially in controversial writings, to keep the heart and pen in such an exact mids, as to be neither chargeable with defect in that compassionating *lenity*, nor excess in that cutting *severity*, which are both authorised by the foresaid Apostolical rules, as various cases may require.

That the true knowledge of God in Christ, and of the truth as it is in him, may be advanced by this book, and true religion,

religion, in oppoſition to that which is falſe and imaginary, may be thereby promoted, is the earneſt deſire and prayer of the author,

R. E.

ADDENDA.

SINCE I wrote what is above from *page* 154 to 158, I have had occaſion to ſee that place in *Turretine, inſtit. theol. tom.* II. *q.* 10. *p.* 72. to which Mr. *Robe* refers *p.* 44. of his Letter, without quoting either book or page, or marking in a different character the words of *Turretine*; which he ſeems but very unfairly to tranſlate: For, 1. he brings in *Turretine* ſaying, 'That it is no more unlawful to "make an external image of Jeſus Chriſt, than to form an "image or idea of him in our minds; — for a mental image "— is abſolutely neceſſary, *&c.*" *Turretine* ſays no ſuch thing. He is there oppoſing himſelf to, and condemning the uſe of all images in divine worſhip, as other orthodox writers do. He has not one word there of an external image of Jeſus Chriſt; nor does he ſpeak of the neceſſity of any mental image in ſuch a ſenſe as Mr. *Robe* calls *abſolute*. If he had been well acquaint with *Turretine*, he would have taught him elſewhere to diſtinguiſh, (and conſider, that there is *neceſſitas phyſica, coactionis, hypothetica*, as well as *abſoluta*:) For as there may be a phyſical or natural neceſſity, which yet is in itſelf ſinful by reaſon of our now corrupted nature; ſo *Turretine* in this place ſpeaks of ſuch a neceſſity as is ſuppoſed to be involuntary, or which a man cannot help; for he ſets it in oppoſition to the voluntary work of men in making outward images. Hence, 2. Mr. *Robe* has not noticed, that *Turretine* there is only ſhewing, that the conſequence will not hold, if men argue for the lawfulneſs of outward artificial painted images of certain things, from the neceſſity of their having inward natural images or ideas of theſe things; becauſe the artificial image is a voluntary work, merely of choice,

† For the ſatisfaction of the learned reader, I ſhall here ſet down *Turretine*'s own words: 'Ab *imagine mentali* ad *imaginem ſculptam vel pictam* 'non valet conſequentia; quia illa eſt neceſſitatis, ſiquidem conſpicere 'non poſſum rem ullam ſine aliqua ſpecie ejus, aut idea in animo efficta. 'At imago iſta conjuncta ſemper eſt cum ſpiritu diſcretionis, quo verum 'à falſo ita ſecernimus, ut nullum ſit idololatriæ periculum. Sed iſta meri 'arbitrii & voluntatis opus, quod à Deo expreſsè eſt prohibitum, & quod 'magno cum idololatriæ periculo ſemper eſt conjunctum. Unde perperam non minus peccatum dicitur imagines certarum rerum menti objicere, vel ſcriptis comprehendere, & legendas exhibere, ac eas in tabula delineatas viſui ſubjicere; cum magnum ſit inter iſta diſcrimen.'

choice, and expreſly prohibited of God, and joined with the greateſt danger of idolatry: whereas the mental idea we have of things, is natural and unavoidable; becauſe one cannot apprehend any thing without ſome repreſentation of it, while imagining it in his mind; and conſequently it cannot be equally ſinful with the making of an outward image, eſpecially when this is a work of the will, or of choice, and the other not ſo. Hence, 3. Mr. *Robe* ſeems to wrong *Turretine* alſo in tranſlating that ſentence, *viz. At imago iſta conjuncta ſemper eſt cum ſpiritu diſcretionis, quo verum à falſo ita ſecernimus, ut nullum ſit idololatriæ periculum.* The laſt branch whereof he tranſlates thus: *That* THERE IS *no danger of idolatry*; making no difference between the ſubjunctive *ſit*, and the indicative *eſt*, in the ſame ſentence, but reading them both alike, and thereby altering the ſenſe and meaning of the author; as if he had ſaid, *there is* no danger of idolatry; whereas he plainly ſuppoſes the danger, by ſuppoſing a true and a falſe object both preſented to the mind: But he mentions the mean, namely, a ſpirit of diſcerning, whereby we ſo ſeparate the true from the falſe, *that there* MAY BE *no danger of idolatry*, or that *we may* avoid that danger. Hereby that learned author intimates, that whatever falſe repreſentation is made to the mind of the true ſpiritual worſhipper, is altogether involuntary, and ſuch as, by the help of that ſpiritual diſcerning which is given to him, he rejects and drives away from him, that he may not worſhip an idol: inſomuch that, in the lines which Mr. *Robe* pretends to gloſs and tranſlate, *Turretine* has told neither him nor me any ſuch thing as he alledges. And therefore I remit him again to *Turretine*; whom if he read and expound better, he may read his own confutation, and ſee how unjuſtly he would father his imaginary doctrine upon that learned author, and impute ſuch erroneous ſentiments to him, which his fair and accurate readers will ſee he was never chargeable with. I had therefore good reaſon for ſaying what I ſaid above in the foremention'd pages.

How much *Turretine* is wronged, and how mightily Mr. *Robe* has been ſtraitened to find an argument or authority for his imaginary ideas, where yet it was not to be found, when he palmed the foreſaid errors upon *Turretine*, may farther appear from the following remark, *viz.* What *Turretine* meant by a *mental image* in the beginning of that paragraph, (and from whence he ſhews that none can juſtly infer the lawfulneſs of graven or painted images in divine worſhip,) he explains in the cloſe of that ſame paragraph, ſo as to be quite alien from, and oppoſite to Mr. *Robe*'s imaginary idea: For he ſhews there, what

what every one will grant, that there is a great difference between images of certain things repreſented to the *mind* in books to be read, (ſuch as figurative expreſſions, metaphors, ſimilies, parables in the holy ſcriptures, and other good books,) and images of theſe things preſented to the *ſight* of the eyes as drawn upon a table, or painted outwardly, and objected to the bodily ſenſe; and he aſſerts, that they ſpeak amiſs or falſely who ſay, that the former is equally ſinful with the latter. Now, as the author ſpeaks not at all of any mental image of Jeſus Chriſt, ſo he had good reaſon to ſay, that there is a great difference between the images of ſome things repreſented, in ſimilies and metaphors by word or write, to the *mind inwardly*, and images of theſe things preſented, in pictures or graven images, to the *ſenſe outwardly*. Why, beſide what *Turretine* has there ſaid, I preſume to add, theſe two ſeem to differ as much as a divine ordinance differs from a human invention: For the former is a repreſenting of things to the *mind* in a way agreeable to the divine command, allowance and example; whereas the latter is a preſenting theſe things to the outward *ſenſe* by human art, without a divine warrant, yea againſt the will and command of God. By the one, which is a repreſenting intelligible things to the mind, by ſenſible ſimilies and figures, we atempt to ſpiritualiſe corporeal things; by the other, which is a preſenting painted images to the ſenſe, we corporate ſpiritual things, (as all truths, or objects of faith and worſhip, are,) by giving them the ſhape of bodies. The firſt of theſe is a lawful mean, and neceſſary for exhibiting the things repreſented thereby to the *inward underſtandings* of men as they are *rational*, in order to advance their *intellective* knowledge: The laſt is in the foreſaid and many caſes unlawful, and a voluntary work, for exhibiting the things repreſented thereby to the *outward ſenſes* of men as they are *animal*, tending at beſt to promote no better than a *ſenſitive knowledge*; which is quite diſtinct from a ſpiritual and intellective knowledge, both in the nature and certainty thereof. Which the learned philoſopher *Hiereboord* (*Diſp. p.* 170.) diſtinguiſhes thus: 'Intellective 'knowledge [ſays he] is more certain than ſenſitive; and 'that, 1. Not ſo much in reſpect of their power, (for ſenſe 'does as certainly cloſe with its proper ſenſible object, as the 'underſtanding does to its intelligible one,) as indeed in re'ſpect of their objects: For the object of ſenſe is many ways 'variable; but the object of underſtanding is more invariable, 'becauſe it underſtands univerſals and ſpirituals; but ſenſe 'knows only ſingulars and materials: And alſo in reſpect 'of the ſubſtance, that is ſingular, ſenſible and material.'

'The knowledge of the understanding is more certain than 'the knowledge of sense; because sense only touches the 'things that are extrinsical and accidental; but the under-'standing penetrates the intrinsical and innermost essence of 'the thing. 2. If we consider the powers themselves as such, 'not in relation to their objects, the intellective is absolutely 'surer than the sensitive; because the last of these may, on 'many accounts, be hindered from obtaining certainty, name-'ly, by the distance of the medium, or the too great near-'ness of it, or the organ not rightly disposed, &c. But the 'understanding, though it may be deceived, yet it is not sub-'ject to so many deceits, nor on so many accounts. In a 'word, by the understanding we are said properly to know 'by a certain, infallible evident knowledge. And hence 'our knowledge of things *necessary* is more certain than our 'knowledge of things *contingent* (or fortuitous:) For, see-'ing things necessary are more certain than things contingent, 'the knowledge of the former will also be more certain than 'the knowledge of the latter; because knowledge is propor-'tioned to its object, and the subjective certainty *(mentis)* of 'the mind depends upon the objective certainty *(entis)* of the 'being or thing known.' Now, by sensitive knowledge the human nature of Christ cannot be known to be what indeed it is, namely, a nature not subsisting in itself: Of which the same learned *Hiereboord* says, *Disp. p.* 9. 'A nature can be sus-'tained without a proper subsistence of its own: as is evi-'dent in Christ, who hath no human or created subsistence.' Now, to prescind or abstract from the consideration of that human nature as to the manner of its subsistence in the personality of the Son of God, is to prescind from it as it is the object of faith, and to view it sensitively, as a human corporeal substance, an object of sense, or vain sensitive imagination. Nothing about Christ, as he is the object of faith, can be known or understood sensitively, without the greatest absurdity. A sensitive knowledge here agrees neither with reason nor religion. Hence, for example, the sensitive image of Christ as a crucified man, presented to the mind, belongs no way to faith. In opposition to such a vain notion I may cite the words of *Charnock*, *vol.* II. *p.* 1171. 'We are to be-'lieve in Christ for the remission of sin; which is obtained, 'not so much by the sacrifice, as by the quality of the sacri-'fice. To consider him merely in his passion, without the 'excellency of his person, would excite neither faith nor love, 'but grief and horror. The nature of the sacrifice must *first* be 'considered; and that we cannot have a prospect of in the 'value and merit of it, till we fix the eye of our faith upon

'the

'the greatneſs of his perſon who was made a ſacrifice for 'us. Faith therefore reſpects the perſon of Chriſt immediate-'ly; but not abſolutely in himſelf, but as he ſtands in relati-'on to his Father, as his Son and his ſervant.' By ſenſitive knowledge a man may think he is moſt ſure, when yet it is quite otherwiſe; and think he has an intellective knowledge of a perſon with whom he converſes, and yet may be juſt ignorant of him. Thus the *Jews* did not know Chriſt, when they were ſpeaking to him, and he to them, *John* viii. 19. *Ye neither know me, nor my Father: If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo.* The devil knew him better than they, when he ſaid, *Mark* i. 24. *I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.* Thus by ſenſitive and imaginative knowledge a man like Mr. *Robe* may think he knows the human nature of Chriſt now in heaven, as well as he can think of *Enoch* and *Elias* there. But let him anſwer *Charnock*, if he will, who ſays, *vol.* II. *p.* 1093. 'The hu-'manity of Chriſt is glorified above the reach of any human 'underſtanding. The glory of the ſaints is not to be fathom-'ed by the conceptions of men; much leſs the glory of Chriſt, 'the exemplar of all the glory they are to have.' In a word, I may add, by ſenſitive knowledge in itſelf a man is *little higher* than a brute, *Pſal.* xcii. 6; whereas by intellective and ſpiritual knowledge a man is *little lower* than an angel, *Pſal.* viii. 5.

From what I have ſaid above it may be evident to the judicious, that the mental image *Turretine* ſpeaks of, is as different from the imaginary idea Mr. *Robe* maintains, as a ſpirit is different from a body, or a ſpiritual from a corporeal thing: For the objects of the mental idea *Turretine* mentions, are things intelligible, and as they are intelligible; and the ſpecies and ideas, which he makes neceſſary, are intelligible ſpecies and intellectual ideas; inſomuch that though the ſubjects of diſcourſe ſhould be things material and corporeal, yet the mind is occupied about them in a ſpiritual or rational way, or in an orb vaſtly ſuperior to matter or bodies, and about them as they are intelligible: Whereas the objects of imaginary ideas Mr. *Robe* ſpeaks of, are things corporeal; and the ſpecies and ideas he makes neceſſary, are corporeal ſpecies and imaginative ideas; inſomuch that the things about which theſe ideas are converſant, being only things material and corporeal, the mind to which theſe things are preſented, is occupied about them in a carnal or ſenſitive way, and only as they are corporeal, according to Mr. *Robe*'s own confeſſion. So that thus the angel is brought down to the brute, to move in an inferior ſenſitive orb, vaſtly below itſelf, and below its own proper, ſpiritual and intelli-

gible objects; and the rational mind is but darkened and abused by objects of sense and fancy presented to it, instead of objects of faith and spiritual understanding. Hence it appears, that as, on the one hand, from the mental images *Turretine* speaks of, to infer, as he says, the lawfulness of graven and painted images, is highly absurd, as well as contrary to the command of God; so, on the other hand, from thence to infer, as Mr. *Robe* does, the necessity or lawfulness of an external image of Jesus Christ, or an internal imaginary idea of him, is, by the same parity of reason, equally absurd, and equally overturned by *Turretine*'s argument.

Mr. *Robe* may therefore consider, not only what wrong he hath done to *Turretine*, if such a famous name can be sullied with such a foolish pen; but especially what wrong he has done to him who has *a name above every name*; since an image of Jesus Christ, either presented to the eye outwardly, or painted on the imagination inwardly, can never give any but a false representation, not only of that infinitely glorious person, but even of that human nature which it pretends to represent; and so can be no help to, or means of understanding it: For, as the learned philosopher above named says, (*p. ibid.* where he illustrates both the branches of the saying, *viz.*) "He that understands a thing otherwise than it 'is, does not understand it; and he that understands a thing 'otherwise than it is, understands a falsehood."

At *p.* 272. *l.* 36. It may be added, that *Turretine* speaks 'to this purpose, *Instit. theol. tom.* I. *p.* 192. 'Tis little matter whether the natural sense of a Deity be explained or 'expressed by a natural knowledge, or by a common notion, or by a mental conception, or, with later writers, 'by an idea of God as the most perfect being, impressed into our minds: It comes to the same purpose, *viz.* That 'there is ingrafted in every one by nature the sense of a 'Deity, which suffers not itself to be hid, but exerts itself of 'its own accord in all adult persons that are endued with a 'sound mind. Only we observe, that an idea of God is not 'properly said to be imprinted in us, if by it is signified any 'species or intelligible image of God in our minds, supposed to give a clear and distinct representation of the quiddity and essence of God: For this is what neither the infinite Majesty of God nor our finite and frail understanding can allow or admit, *&c.*'

THE

APPENDIX

To the BOOK, intitled,

FAITH no FANCY:

RELATING

To Part of the late Writings of the Reverend Meſſ. *Williſon* and *Currie:*

SHEWING

Some groſs Falſhoods therein; and eſpecially clearing ſome Points of Goſpel-doctrine, injured by their Defence of the Act of Aſſembly 1722, &c.

By RALPH ERSKINE, *A. M.* Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Dunfermline.*

EDINBURGH:

Printed for WILLIAM GRAY Bookbinder, in the *Graſs-Market*, near the *Weſt-Port*, South-ſide, *Edinburgh*; and ſold by him and other Bookſellers in Town and Country. MDCCXLV.

APPENDIX,

Containing ſome Remarks upon Part of the late Writings of the Reverend Meſſ. Williſon *and* Currie, *touching ſome Points of Goſpel-doctrine, injured by their Defence of the Act of Aſſembly* 1722, &c.

AFTER theſe remarks upon Mr. *Robe*'s pamphlet, I may, before I cloſe, notice, that he has no great reaſon to boaſt of his helpers, particularly the Reverend Meſſieurs *Currie* and *Williſon*, with reference to ſome of their late writings; wherein I ſuppoſe he and they will have but little credit of one another, ere all be done. They have publiſhed, beſides other errors, ſome of the greateſt falſhoods in fact, which every man living may know to be ſo. I ſhall give a ſingle inſtance in each of them, after I have noticed ſome points of doctrine wherein they have erred: for it cannot be expected that now I ſhould fall upon the anſwering their pamphlets. I ſhall only offer a ſwatch of what regard is owing to their preſent writings, while they are driven aſide out of God's way with the wind and tempeſt of the late temptations, not yet over with reſpect to them.

I have ſome reaſon, in an *Appendix* to the foregoing treatiſe, to ſpeak of theſe two brethren, and their doctrine, in regard they have both eſpouſed Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine of imaginary ideas, of which I have been treating. Mr. *Currie* has done ſo in his pamphlet, intitled, *The plain perjury*, &c. *p.* 11. where he quotes Mr. *Robe*'s *fourth letter* with approbation, declaring, Mr. *Robe* has proven his point; or, as he expreſſes it, ſhewn to be groſs hereſy what is there alledged againſt Mr. *Fiſher* and me. Of which afterward. Mr. *Williſon* has eſpouſed that doctrine likewiſe, in his letter to Mr. *Fiſher*, *p.* 7. where he brings in Mr. *Robe* among the number of judicious Miniſters that have read philoſophy and divinity, and ſpeaks of his ſecond letter to Mr. *Fiſher* with approbation and ſatisfaction, in which he vented that imaginary

ginary doctrine, which my remarks upon, occasioned his writing more upon that subject in his *fourth letter*; which now has occationed this foregoing treatise. If it appear, from what I may say in this *Appendix*, that these two brethren are not such friends as they ought to be, unto some points of true gospel-doctrine, it will appear also, that God is righteous, in suffering them to fall into the mire of espousing this imaginary doctrine, I mean this relating to the imaginary idea of Christ as man: which may seem the more strange, since Mr. *Willison* asserts, in the same page of his letter above cited, that we cannot think upon spiritual objects without imaginary ideas attending our meditations; *which indeed* (says he) *is owing to our lapsed and imperfect state.* Whence one would think he cannot be of Mr. *Robe*'s mind, as to these ideas in believing, as if they were as much absolutely necessary *helps*, as they are natural *attendants* in spiritual meditation: for, if every thing that is owing to our lapsed and imperfect state, that naturally attends our spiritual work, be judged a necessary help toward the right performance thereof, then flesh and spirit might shake hands and agree.—— Mr. *Currie* also, in another late pitiful pamphlet, intitled, *A new testimony*, &c. says, *p.* 40. *That that which is only imaginary, hath nothing of reality in it, having no being but in the man or woman's fancy or imagination.* But, while these brethren are busied in their endeavours to prove self-contradictions on others, God is suffering them thus, with their own hand, to expose themselves to the world as self condemned.

But it is the less wonder that they are left to embrace this delusive and imaginary doctrine, in regard they have been also left to embrace that delusive and imaginary work which it is designed to support. This must be my continued sentiment anent that work, till it appear to have these marks of a saving work, in opposition to a delusive one, which I opened up in the pamphlet, intitled, *Fraud and Falshood discovered*, &c. and reprinted at the end of this *Appendix*.

The Reverend Mr *John Currie*, (before I speak of the above falshood), since he left his first love and zeal, has been so far left of God, as to espouse this delusive imaginary doctrine, by defending and adopting what Mr. *Robe* has written; as appears in his scandalous and calumnious book, intitled, *The plain perjury and great iniquity of the Seceding brethrens new covenant*; where he says, *p.* 11. "What errors can you charge upon any of them?" and brings in his adherent to the church answering thus; "Sundry might be particularised; I mention only two at this "time; as, *first* the error that has been advanced or maintained "by the Reverend Messieurs *Ralph Erskine* and *James Fisher*, "which

" which Mr. *Robe*, in his *fourth letter to Mr. Fiſher, p.* 31, &c. " has ſhewn to be groſs hereſy, [*he ſhould have ſaid blaſphemy* " *too, as Mr.* Robe *does ; but it ſeems his conſcience ſtartled here*], " namely, their *denying that the human nature of Chriſt is any* " *part of the object of faith.* Surely all that would be ſaved, they " muſt believe in him, as he is the adorable *Immanuel*, God-" man, in two diſtinct natures, *&c.*" Here Mr. *Currie* takes it for granted, at leaſt repreſents to the world, what I am ſure his conſcience, if it be not now ſeared, dare not aſſert before God, that we are chargeable with this groſs hereſy, as he calls it, and yet expreſſes in ſuch a way, as ſhows, I fear, his groſs ignorance of this ſubject. This I muſt conclude is the caſe, until he can ſhow me, whether Chriſt's two diſtinct natures, in one perſon, be two diſtinct parts of the object of faith ; or, if that object cannot be parted, and a whole Chriſt, God and man in one perſon, be only one undivided object of faith, what part of this object does faith leave behind, to be the object of his or Mr. *Robe's* imaginary idea ? and whether faith, that takes in the whole object, need the help of fancy, that is ſuppoſed to take in but a part, where yet there are no parts, but two natures in one perſonality, that cannot be conceived a part without conceiving a falſhood, nor conceived unite any other way but by faith ? His anſwer to this might diſcover, whether he underſtood what he was writing. 'Tis true, Mr. *Currie* does not ſpeak at all of an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, as neceſſary to faith, nor does he aſſert, that that image of Chriſt in the head, or that corporeal object, which may be the object of any man's fancy, is any part of the object of faith : this he deceitfully hides, (tho' he knew it was the ſtate of the queſtion), that ſo none might ſee what is juſtly challenged in Mr. *Robe*, his confounding faith and fancy ; and that all his readers might be led to think we were excluding the human nature of Chriſt, as ſubſiſting in his divine perſon, from belonging to the object of faith. He was reſolved, it ſeems, to be ſo far from ſtating the queſtion fairly to his readers, that they ſhould not have the leaſt hint from him, whereby they ſhould be able to free or defend us from that bloody charge, but might be perſuaded we were guilty of groſs hereſy in our writing, as well as groſs perjury in our covenanting. But God will not be mocked with ſuch words of diſſimulation, deceit, diſhoneſty, and wilful ſlander. This has been too much the ſtrain of his writings, ever ſince he took the field againſt that now glorified ſaint Mr. *Wilſon*, or rather againſt that reformation cauſe he defended. But, as to the point in hand, I own, that this twenty four years, by his way of preaching of faith, when I heard him, I had a jealouſy, that he was

in

in the mist about the doctrine relating to the proper *assurance* of faith, and the ground of it: but now he has also bewrayed his darkness or ignorance as to the true *object* of faith, the glorious Θεάνθρωπος, as presented in the glass of the gospel, while, by justifying Mr. *Robe*'s doctrine, he hath made an imaginary idea of Christ as man, or a mental image of his human body, to be of such concern therein. I must suppose, that he hath written either ignorantly or maliciously. I would incline rather to impute it to ignorance than malice, or envy; which will but burst and break the vessels that hold it: this made the poet *Martial* say, *Rumpatur, quisquis rumpitur invidiâ.* But, if any shall suppose it was only rashly and inconsiderately he hath done so; this will appear, if, after consideration, he shall retract this gross doctrine: which he will be glad to do, if he hath the regard he professes to bear to the honour and glory of our *Immanuel*, God-man, whom he hath dishonoured and affronted, by espousing the idolatrous doctrine of faith, built upon the imaginary idea of him as man; which includes neither his Deity nor personality, nay, nor any rational knowledge of his humanity, as it is an intellectual creature; far less any view of the mystery of that humanity, as subsisting in the person of the eternal Word. It is with fear and trembling before God, I should observe, with relation to this my once very dear and Reverend brother, that his rejecting and reproaching the duty and testimony of the day, hath justly provoked God to take vengeance on his inventions, and give him up to embrace and patronise both the defections and delusions of the day.

But now the falshoods, of which I give but one instance, is in *p.* 20 and 21 of his foresaid pamphlet, where he is attempting to prove, that the covenant which the brethren and other Seceders now take, is a covenant in which they swear solemnly and plainly against themselves; "which, he says, is manifest from this, "that in their new covenant they swear against Independency, "and yet they themselves declare for, and go in with our bre"thren the Independents, in what is the main thing in contro"versy between them and the Presbyterians: as when these "brethrens doctrine is, that no regard is to be had to the sen"tence or determination of church judicatures, no not of a Ge"neral Assembly, unless we judge them to be right, and agree"able to God's word, *&c.*" This he here attempts to prove to be an Independent principle, and not a Presbyterian one, but the main thing Presbyterians have in controversy with them. Now, that this is a gross falshood, Mr. *Currie* himself proves in his own sermon before the Synod of *Fife*, but twelve years ago, on 2 *Tim.* ii. 15. published by himself; where, *p.* 32. 33. 34. 35.

35. he shews, first from scripture, then from our old and late confessions of faith, and afterwards from the testimony of great men in the church, that what he now calls an Independent principle, is and ever was a Presbyterian principle. The paragraph is too long to be here inserted; but as many will have the sermon among their hands, so they that have it, may compare Mr. *Currie now* with Mr. *Currie then*; and I am sure, if they have any eyes in their heads, and ingenuity in their hearts, they will see and acknowledge, that he is as far from what he was, as darkness is from light; insomuch that I bid him a defiance to answer his own arguments, by which he demonstrates, that this doctrine (namely, That no regard is to be had to the authority or determination of Presbyteries, Synods, Commissions, General Assemblies, nay nor Oecumenick Councils, but in so far as judged right and agreeable to God's word) is and ever was a Presbyterian principle; or, which is the same, that we should acquiesce in, subject our judgments, or yield obedience to their determinations, without examining whether agreeable to God's word, is not, nor never was a Presbyterian principle. And I can hardly think Mr. *Currie* can compare himself with himself, without shame and confusion of face before God and man. How heavy is the judgment of God upon him, that he is left now to abandon this Presbyterian principle, and espouse what he there, in the forecited pages, proves to be a *Prelatick one*, and seems now to approve of what he then and there called *the blind obedience of Romanists* *. But perhaps it will be the province of others to take more particular notice of his present writings.

The Reverend Mr. *Willison*, in a *Postscript* to what is called, *A fair and impartial testimony*, does attempt, with great pains, to expose the work of God among our hands, by casting loads of heavy reproach, and false calumnious charges upon the late acts of the Associate Presbytery, both relating to the doctrine of grace, and the renovation of the covenants. I doubt not but it will appear in due time, how much he hath exposed himself in this attempt, and shewn his own weakness and wickedness in what he hath advanced against the Seceding brethren; which I expect-

* Of this principle see *Maccovii & Arnoldi regulam* 12. *de ecclesia, p.* 145. *Ecclesiæ non credendum, nisi ex scriptura loquatur, liquet Gen.* 17. *si ex præscripto legis loquutus fuerit. Matth.* 28. *Ite, & docete, &c. pag.* 170. *Qui volunt contra principia disputare, produnt suam insciti am.* What the poet said of vertues once attained, I may say of *principles*,

Turpe est { *virtutem* / *principiam* } *dedidicisse* { *datam.* / *datum.* }

I expect will be examined by some other hand. But as the truths of the glorious gospel should ly nearest to our hearts, so what I am to notice here relates thereto. It is very unpleasant, to see a man bewray his great ignorance of the gospel, that hath preached so long and printed so much about it. But that even the Reverend Mr. *Willison* hath done so, to me appears evident: for, in his attack upon the first of these acts, he seems to have meddled with what was above him, I mean above the insight he has ever yet got into gospel-doctrine. And, till he shall clear himself of heterodoxy, or reconcile with orthodoxy, his asserting Christ's offices to be the proper fountain of God's promises; (*cujus contrarium est verum*), and other erroneous and legal positions dropt here and there in his catechisms, however much reputed, and disseminate among the vulgar, I cannot look upon him as a very fit judge to determine any thing against the Associate Presbytery's act anent the doctrine of grace: against which I think not strange that he, according to the custom of other Legalists, insinuates the old rotten charge of *Antinomianism*, as he does, *p.* 130. from which the Apostle *Paul* found himself obliged to defend that doctrine, saying, *Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* Nor do I think strange, that he and his seven brethren, the subscribers of what they call the *fair and impartial testimony*, have thereby, either through their great ignorance, or inexcusable inadvertency, subscribed a testimony against the glorious gospel of Christ, in the very vitals of it, by their signing with their hand an approbation of the act of Assembly 1722, explaining and confirming the acts 1720, by which so many precious truths of the gospel were condemned. This they did, *p.* 44 of their *testimony*; where they say, "It must be owned, that, when the Assembly 1722 "came to review and explain these hasty acts passed in 1720, "they did justice to truth, and declared their minds, concerning "the acts and propositions quarrelled, in very sound and ortho"dox terms." Where three things may be remarked. (1.) They plainly prevaricate with reference to the title of the act 1722, as if it was only an explication, and not a confirmation of these hasty acts (as they stile them) passed in 1720; whereas the very title of the act bears, that it was for explaining and confirming it: so that, in so far as truth was condemned by the act 1720, that condemnation was confirmed by the act 1722. And therefore we that were the representers, knowing that no explication would mend an act by which truth was condemned, addressed for the repeal thereof: which was never granted. (2.) They here assert, that the Assembly 1722 did justice to truth. To this purpose, but with as little knowledge and consideration,

ſideration, ſaid Mr. *Currie*, in his *Eſſay on ſeparation, p.* 115. "That, if in [ſuch and ſuch] a particular the Aſſembly was un-"found in 1720, yet ſhe was orthodox in 1722." But what juſtice was done to truth by that act, may appear to all the lovers of the truth as it is in Jeſus, who ſhall with judgment and underſtanding read and conſider the Aſſociate Presbytery's act anent the doctrine of grace. Nay, all the juſtice done to truth was ſuch a daſh as made her fall in the ſtreet, ſo as never yet to be raiſed up in the eſtabliſhed church. (3.) They here aſſert, that the Aſſembly 1722 declared their minds concerning the acts and propoſitions quarrelled in very ſound and orthodox terms. Whence we may ſee, from the inſtance they give, what terms theſe brethren reckoned ſound and orthodox, even theſe that expreſſed the *neceſſity of holineſs* to ſalvation; thus, that tho' it does not give a right or title to it, yet it *is a federal and conditional mean, having a kind of cauſality in order to the obtaining of glory.* They approve of the act 1722, explaining that point in theſe terms; which yet are ſuch as refined *Papiſts*, moderate *Arminians*, and any Legaliſts, may agree with, that turn the goſpel to a new law, or a new covenant of works, requiring, beſides the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to found our right and title to glory, a new and another righteouſneſs in our own perſons, to found our poſſeſſion of it, or to be a federal condition and cauſe of it. Here is at beſt but the old covenant merit of paction on our part, confounded with the new covenant merit of purchaſe on Chriſt's part; and ſuch a way to heaven and eternal life, as led the whole *Jewiſh* nation to miſs it, while they *ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone*, Rom. ix. 33. I doubt not but theſe acts 1720 and 1722 were thro' inadvertency gone into by ſome members of theſe Aſſemblies, and perhaps through inadvertency theſe brethren have ſubſcribed an approbation of them; yet, if they be the true friends of the truth, and begin to advert that they have condemned it, ſurely they will never ſuffer it to ſtand condemned by them, as now it hath been by the judicatures of the eſtabliſhed church theſe twenty four years.

It would ſeem it was partly through inadvertency, as well as with deliberation, that Mr. *Williſon* himſelf hath ſubſcribed an approbation of that act 1722; for as he did it before he read our act condemning it, ſo, upon the ſight thereof, it ſeems he was ſomewhat ſtartled; as appears by his *Poſtſcript, p.* 127. He was thereby led to read over the Aſſembly's acts, and then ſays, (1.) *Upon ſecond thoughts I ſhall not ſay it is ſo well worded as could be wiſhed.* This way of ſpeaking is like that of Mr. *Currie*'s *Eſſay, p.* 114. where, ſpeaking of the act 1720, and bewraying his

ignorance of what he calls *the Marrow doctrine*, a name by which the gospel-doctrine was defamed, he brings in Mr. *Allan Logan* as no friend to it; by which he does little service to his memory, tho' he stiles him *a worthy servant of Christ*: and he speaks of his condemning that act, yet so, as if he had complained of nothing but *the wording of it*; though it is well known there were several points in it which he could by no means justify. And hence, if I may retort one story with another, it can yet be proven by ear-witnesses, that, when a Reverend Professor was, in open court, defending the act 1720, and condemning the Marrow for asserting, and our representation for allowing, that, *as the law is the covenant of works, believers are wholly and altogether set free from it, set free both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works*; and when he was granting that believers are free from the *condemning power* of the law as a covenant of works, but alledging, that to say they were free from the *commanding power* of it, was unwarrantable or unaccountable; Mr. *Logan*, according to his usual short and sententious way of speaking, rises up, and cries out, *Take up your fine Professors of divinity, Moderator.* And as by this he meant a severe animadversion upon that Professor's ignorance about that point; so it is sufficiently known by some of our own number, how the said Professor taught the students under him, *That tho' Protestants opposed the Popish merit of condignity, yet they allowed that merit of paction* which I have hinted at above: though, by the by, I know no merit but of this last sort, that could take place even under the covenant of works made with the first *Adam*. What is said here, may tend to shew what was the spirit and principle of the chief framers of these acts 1720 and 1722; though Mr. *Currie* says, he thinks the church of *Scotland* was far from designing the least countenance to error thereby. But what the design of them all was, is not the question; we are not concerned with the secrets of mens hearts and designs: but as the design of some of them is plain, so the design of the act itself, which is the thing we condemn, is evident to all that understand the gospel, namely, to undermine and destroy it. Mr. *Currie* also, in the above cited place, seems to rest satisfied with the explanation of that act 1720 in 1722; (he should have also said with the confirmation of it therein, if he had not prevaricated, as Mr. *Willison* does, about the title of it); yet he wishes the foresaid act 1720 had been formally repealed, because it was not *better worded*. And thus Mr *Willison* here says now of the act 1722, it is not so *well worded* as could be wished. Here is a seeming agreement with us; yet under a real difference: for what do we complain of, but that these acts are so *worded*, as to be in their words directly

directly oppoſite to what the Spirit of God calls *the word of the truth of the goſpel*, Col. i. 5? but theſe brethren condemn the words, and yet juſtify the acts.

2. Mr. *Williſon* here adds in the forecited *pag.* 127. but very faintly, *that he ſhall not ſay, the word* cauſality *is fit to be uſed in aſſerting the neceſſity of holineſs to ſalvation.* But his mentioning only of this, ſays, he falls in with the word *federal conditionality*, as fit enough to be uſed in aſſerting that neceſſity: which bewrays too much of a legal, *Neonomian* ſpirit. For, without turning the goſpel to a new law, with *Baxterians* and others, or a new covenant of works, 'tis impoſſible to make ſuch a federal connexion between our perſonal holineſs and heaven, as if the promiſe of eternal life were made to our holineſs or obedience, *as ſuch:* which is, upon the matter, a denying that eternal life is promiſed to the perfect obedience of Chriſt our Surety, or at beſt but a halving of the matter between his obedience and ours: and thus is is a bringing in alſo our holy obedience to have even more than ſome kind of cauſality in order to the obtaining of glory; notwithſtanding that he is conſtrained to own, that the word *cauſality* here is improper: for though he ſeems to abandon the word, yet he fixes the ſenſe of it, by allowing the former words, whereof this is but exegetical; for a proper federal condition may well be denominate a cauſe. Of which more afterward.

But again, this good man's legal ſpirit is further diſcovered by what follows. For though he now diſapproves the wording of that act; yet, having ſubſcribed, as above, an approbation of it, he muſt do his beſt to defend it, eſpecially in that point about the neceſſity of holineſs to the obtaining of glory, in the ſenſe of that act; for this he had inſtanced in his teſtimony, *p.* 44. and in order to the defence thereof he ſays, (1.) "But I truly "believe the meaning of the Aſſembly was ſound, and their "intention good, [he ſhould have ſaid the meaning and intention of the act, for this eſpecially is the queſtion in hand, Whether or not truth was condemned there?] "*viz.* to diſapprove every "opinion and expreſſion that tended any way to ſlacken our "obligation to the ſtudy of holineſs." Here now is a broad inſinuation of the ſame calumny Papiſts and all Legaliſts raiſe againſt the doctrine of free grace reigning through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt unto eternal life, namely, That it is a doctrine of licentiouſneſs, tending to mar good works, and ſlacken our obligation to the ſtudy of holineſs: while yet, on the other hand, as the faith of this doctrine is the only root and ſpring of true holineſs; ſo, in the righteous judgment of God, never was the generation left to more ſin and unholineſs, than ſince the do-

ſtrine of the free grace of God in Chriſt came under ſuch diſpa-
ragement and contempt.

(2.) Mr. *Williſon* proceeds, *p.* 128. of that *Poſtſcript*, ſaying, " The brethren have not juſt ground for their harſh cenſure of " that Aſſembly, becauſe of their ſaying, in explaining the ne- " ceſſity of holineſs for obtaining everlaſting happineſs, *that it* " *is to be meant only of obtaining the enjoyment and poſſeſſion of hap-* " *pineſs, and not of the right and title to it.*" Now, beſides the hint I have given at this above, they that incline to ſee how this matter is laid in the *Marrow*, in the *Repreſentation* of the twelve brethren againſt the Act 1720, in their *anſwers* to the Commiſſion's queries, and now in the *act* of the Aſſociate Presbytery anent the doctrine of grace, all which Mr. *Williſon* might have had before his eyes; they cannot but conclude, that his defence of that act on this point, and in theſe circumſtances, muſt flow from the power and prevalence of a legal and *Neonomian* principle. 'Tis true, he ſpeaks of our cenſuring the Aſſembly, as Mr. *Currie* alſo is wont to do, as if it were not acts, but perſons we were condemning. But though they know the contrary, yet they have no reaſon to glory even in the perſons of thoſe who were the framers of theſe acts, as if they all had had the truths of the glorious goſpel at heart in this work: For the contrary appeared from this one inſtance following, *viz.* that, while the twelve brethren were from time to time meeting for prayer, and addreſſing a throne of grace in this matter, the framers of theſe acts, I mean the judicatures of the church, were meeting to make ſport to themſelves, particularly by playing themſelves with the number *twelve*. Hence even the Commiſſion of the General Aſſembly formed *twelve* queries, to be anſwered by the *twelve* brethren; and was, it ſeems, reſolved to make up that number, though ſome of theſe queries do palpably coincide. Hence alſo the Synod of *Merſe* and *Teviotdale*, in their judicial cenſure of the Reverend Mr. *Gabriel Wilſon*'s ſermon, preached before them *anno* 1721, intitled, *The Truſt*, drew up a charge conſiſting of *twelve* remarks, *twelve* queſtions, and *twelve* ſlanders, relating to that ſubject. Thus the wanton kirkmen took pleaſure to ſport themſelves, though, at the ſame time, diſcovering how ridiculouſly ſtraitened ſometimes they were to find their account. Theſe facts are too notour to be denied, while there are yet hundreds of living witneſſes thereof, beſides the printed hints of the hiſtory of theſe times, and the records of the courts themſelves. And thus, inſtead of being ſet for the defence of the goſpel, and the precious truths thereof, they were ſet upon defending their corrupt and erroneous acts, and upon the demoliſhing of theſe *twelve* men, with an *equal* number of hammers and axes lifted up againſt

gainſt them ; not conſidering how they were lifting up theſe inſtruments to break down the carved work of the ſanctuary, the precious truths of the glorious goſpel, and burying them under the rubbiſh of theſe acts ; tho' they might have aſſured themſelves, that truth would ariſe, and appear againſt them in due time.

(3.) Mr. *Williſon*, *ibid.* proceeds to defend the act 1722, even in its enacting, *That it is dangerous to aſſert, that holy obedience is not a federal or conditional mean, nor has any kind of cauſality in order to the obtaining of glory.* This he defends, by alledging, we neglected to notice the following explanatory clauſe, namely, *as it ſeems to exclude all uſefulneſs and influence of holy obedience in order of means towards the poſſeſſion of heaven.* This laſt clauſe of the Aſſembly's words, he ſays, plainly limits the ſenſe in which they diſapprove the aforeſaid aſſertion, *viz.* in ſo far as they ſeem to exclude the uſefulneſs of holineſs in order of means to ſalvation. Now, this defence will appear to be very weak, if it be conſidered, that though the brethren had put in that clauſe, which he thinks they have not noticed ; yet they behoved to underſtand it in the ſame ſenſe with the preceeding clauſe ; otherwiſe it would have been quite out of purpoſe for the Aſſembly to have added it: and therefore it was as needleſs for the brethren to notice it, as it is uſeleſs for Mr. *Williſon*'s purpoſe to do ſo ; becauſe the order of means toward the poſſeſſion of heaven they ſpeak of, if any way conſiſtent with the former clauſe, muſt be relating to *federal* means, *conditional* means, *cauſal* means, toward the poſſeſſion of heaven. And is not this the ſame thing over again ? And, (1.) what can be underſtood by *federal* means, but ſuch as are to be uſed in conſequence of the new goſpel law, or covenant of grace in the legal form, according to the *Neonomian* ſcheme ? (2.) What by *conditional* means, when this is by the foreſaid act made the alternative of the other, but ſuch as import the performance of the condition of that new law ? (3.) What by *cauſal* means, or means having ſome kind of cauſality, but ſuch a way of repreſenting means, as Proteſtant churches and divines*, knowing the original natural bias in all men towards ſeeking ſalvation, not by faith in Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, by which alone we are appointed to obtain ſalvation from firſt to laſt, but by works of righteouſneſs done by themſelves, and the danger of ſymboliſing with Papiſts, and other enemies of the grace of the goſpel, have induſtriouſly ſhunned to uſe on that head ? they chooſing rather to call holineſs or good works neceſſary duties of the perſon juſtified and ſaved, than conditions of

* *See anſwers by the twelve brethren to the Commiſſion's queries.*

of ſalvation, far leſs *federal* conditions, or cauſes of it; and to ſay that we are ſaved, not *by* good works, but rather *to* them, as fruits and effects of ſaving grace, and union to Chriſt; or that holineſs is neceſſary unto ſalvation, not ſo much as a mean to the end, as a part of the end itſelf, which part of our ſalvation is neceſſary to make us meet for the other, that is yet behind. Whereas the foreſaid way of ſpeaking of means and holineſs, with reſpect to the obtaining of ſalvation, is without warrant in the holy ſcriptures, diſſonant from the doctrinal ſtandards of our own and other reformed churches, and from the choſen and deliberate ſpeeches of reformed divines on theſe heads, and ſuch as may be eaſily improved as a vehicle for conveying corrupt ſentiments anent the influence of works upon ſalvation. Means of grace, according to the goſpel-order, are connected with the end, namely, ſalvation, not as they are proper or federal conditions, nor as they are any way cauſes of it; but as they are the ordinances of God, which he bleſſes according to his own good pleaſure, as he is both the beginning and the end of our ſalvation, the author and the finiſher of it; working in us both to will and to do, completing at laſt the work that he began: and all in a way of ſovereign grace, reigning thro' the righteouſneſs of Chriſt unto eternal life, *Philip.* i. 6. and iii. 12. 13. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25. 26. 27. 37. *Rev.* i. 8. *Heb.* xii. 2. *Rom.* v. 21. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 9.

(4.) Mr. *Williſon* ſays, *ibid.* " 'Tis uncharitable to charge that " Aſſembly with holding opinions contrary to the doctrine of " grace, when, in the very act we attack, the Aſſembly profeſs " a cloſe adherence to our ſtandards." And then, towards the foot of that page, and beginning of *p.* 129. he ſets down ſome of the words of our ſtandards, which they aſſert in the act 1722. Now, he knows very well, it would be a weak apology for hereticks, to tell, that the ſcriptures they repeat and aſſert, are very ſound, while yet the gloſs they put upon them, is moſt unſound. Even ſo it is here: the act repeats and aſſerts goſpel-doctrines, but explains them in a legal ſenſe; as appears from what I have ſaid, and eſpecially from our act anent the doctrine of grace. Hence it is very unreaſonable, to ſuppoſe that a church is ſound, becauſe ſhe has ſound ſtandards; while under them any heretick that gloſſes them to his own mind, and ſo profeſſes an adherence to them, can be allowed to ſcreen himſelf. However, Mr. *Williſon* reckons, " That, from ſeveral expreſſions of " the Aſſembly 1722, we may juſtly conclude, that their mean- " ing in the expreſſions quarrelled was ſound; and that they did " not mean that a believer's holineſs hath any cauſal influence or " virtue to purchaſe heaven, *&c.*" I muſt ſay, that this defence ſeems to do very little ſervice for ſhewing the ſoundneſs either of

of the act 1722, or the defenders of it: for, as the believer's holineſs may, according to that act, and this explication of it, have a cauſal influence toward the obtaining of heaven, tho' not by way of *purchaſe*; ſo I queſtion, if the Papiſts themſelves magnify their merit of works, even theſe to which they give the name of ſupererogation, ſo highly, as to make them have a *purchaſing* virtue. Their doctrine of merit flows not from their denying the merit and purchaſe of Chriſt, but from their making the goſpel a new law, with a proper reward of debt belonging to the obeyers of it: and that their work ſhould thus merit, they aſcribe to the merit and purchaſe of Chriſt. Mr. *Williſon* ſeems here to make himſelf and that Aſſembly exclude no cauſal influence that the believer's obedience has to the obtaining of heaven, except that of *purchaſing* it: and hence it might be ſuppoſed they mean, that it has a cauſality ſeveral other ways. It is well known, there are ſeveral kinds of cauſes mentioned by philoſophers and divines; and people are left by Mr. *Williſon*, and the act he defends, to aſcribe any cauſal influence to their holineſs for obtaining heaven, excepting only the *purchaſing* cauſe: their works may merit by condignity or congruity, or may be the procuring cauſe, the efficient cauſe, the moving cauſe, the inſtrumental cauſe, the formal and material cauſe, or any cauſe men pleaſe to call it, providing it be not ſaid, they are the *purchaſing* cauſe. Surely it requires a deeper penetration into this myſtery than our Reverend brother has yet expreſſed, ere that act can be defended as ſound and orthodox, or than he or his adjutant (I mean Mr. *Currie*) have ever yet conſidered, even in their moſt powerful, yet poor attempts to vindicate it. As I doubt not but moderate Papiſts will be content it be granted by them, that Chriſt merited heaven for them by way of price and purchaſe, if it ſhall be granted to them, that their works merit heaven by theſe other ways and cauſal means above mentioned; ſo I doubt not but any Legaliſts, that are not very groſs, will be content to allow, that their works and holineſs cannot purchaſe heaven; and will reckon, they have all they ſeek, if it be allowed, that their works have, by virtue of their new evangelical law, a proper conditional or pactional and federal influence or virtue to obtain heaven. Therefore though Mr. *Currie* alſo ſays, upon this head, *p.* 114 of his *Eſſay*, that the exception againſt the act 1720 was fully taken off by the Aſſembly 1722; yet he may ſee now, if he examine the matter again duly, the exceptions againſt that condemnatory act 1720, and confirmatory Act 1722, will never be fully taken off, till they be both repealed, and that many precious truths ly buried there,

there, in the eſtabliſhed church, till ſome reforming Aſſembly open the grave, and vindicate the truth.

Again, Mr. *Williſon*, in the ſaid page of that *Poſtſcript*, ſays, "That the Aſſembly's ſenſe is plainly this, That as Chriſt's righ-"teouſneſs is neceſſary in the way of merit and purchaſe for ob-"taining the believer's right and title to heaven; ſo holineſs in "the believer (which alſo Chriſt hath purchaſed) is neceſſary "in the way of preparation and meetneſs for qualifying him "for the poſſeſſion of heaven." This appears at firſt view to be very well ſaid, and, if the words of the Aſſembly's act had been in theſe terms, 'tis like they had never been quarrelled on that ſcore: but, as they are applied to that act, and made to have the ſame meaning with it, their meaning and import may be juſtly ſuſpected of error, and particularly the groſs error of confounding the covenant of grace with the covenant of works, and alſo of confounding juſtification with ſanctification: for,

1. The preparation and meetneſs for the poſſeſſion of heaven here ſpoke of, if agreeable to that act, muſt import a federal conditionality, and ſome kind of cauſality in our holy obedience for obtaining heaven. This muſt be the caſe as long as theſe expreſſions ſtand in that act, and as long as theſe words have the meaning that every unbiaſſed man of underſtanding muſt put upon them: for they that are ſound and orthodox, will hardly expreſs the merit of works that could take place in the firſt covenant, under ſtronger terms than theſe, That works had a federal conditionality and cauſality, or were the federal condition and cauſe of obtaining the promiſed reward of eternal life. Now, if the word *condition*, when ſpoken of the two covenants, namely, works and grace, be taken in the ſame ſenſe in both, the one will be confounded with the other, ſays Mr. *Stephen Lobb*, in his *Peaceable Inquiry*, *p.* 67. The Popiſh church want no more, but ſuch a confounding of the condition of the covenant of works and grace, to be the ground on which they build their doctrine of the merit of works. And hence the laſt mentioned author cites ſeveral Popiſh authors ſpeaking, one would think, even in more ſound terms than the Aſſembly's act, which Mr. *Williſon* defends, particularly *Alphonſus De Caſtro*, *advers. hæreſ. lib.* 11. ſaying, "We are not ſo ignorant, nor ſo much elated in "our conceit, as to equalize the intrinſick value of our works, "which are moſt inconſiderable, with the tranſcending excel-"lency and immenſe worth of the heavenly glory. It is from "the promiſe, and the covenant made with us, that our "works, which we are enabled through the grace of God to "perform, that makes them worthy of eternal life; which, "ſeparated from the promiſe, would be altogether unworthy.

"We

" We are therefore wholly owing to the unſpeakable mercy of " God for our merit, that he hath made ſo glorious a diſplay " of his grace in this, that, when he owed us nothing, he did " of his abundant goodneſs, to enrich us, make himſelf a " debtor.—— Nor let any calumniate us, as if we detracted " from the merit of our bleſſed Redeemer; none but they who " underſtand not our doctrine can talk after this rate. We " have oft declared, it is not of ourſelves that our good works " merit eternal life; but we and our works are raiſed to this " dignity merely thro' the divine clemency, by which he pro- " miſes to them who obey him eternal life.—— And that they " are thus raiſed, is through the merit of Chriſt, who offered " himſelf a ſacrifice, and prayed earneſtly for all them he knew " were predeſtinated to eternal life. From this therefore, as " from the chief and principal merit, all grace and glory is de- " rived; and from this it is, that the juſt men and their works " are freely ordinated to eternal life." This and much more hath *Alphonſus* about merit *de condigno*, which is highly applauded by *Gregory de Valentia*, whoſe endeavours are to raiſe it to a merit by the rule of commutative juſtice.—— When it is objected to them, That, if the meritorious act be ſo only from the divine promiſe, or God's gracious acceptation, then the reward cannot be to the good work in juſtice, but only in mercy; ſince it may be ſaid that God in faithfulneſs is bound to reward the doer, but not in juſtice; and yet, unleſs God in juſtice be bound, the work cannot be meritorious *ex condigno*: To this objection their anſwer (as it is to be found in *Sancta Clara's Deus nat. grat. p.* 111.) is, " That the fulfilling a *naked promiſe*, " is only an act of fidelity and faithfulneſs; but the fulfilling a " *covenant-promiſe*, which is made on condition as between the " maſter and ſervant, where the maſter promiſes a reward on " condition of ſuch a ſervice, here, for the maſter to fulfil the " promiſe to his ſervant, on performing the condition, is an act " of juſtice: which, ſay they, is our caſe." Thus to make good works meritorious, they aſſert a law with a promiſe, and a law turned to a covenant; whereof obedience to the preceptive part is made the condition: and thus it is that federal conditionality, or the conditionality of that covenant, on which their merit is founded. And though the Aſſembly's act 1722 does not ſpeak of merit, and makes not works to found the right and title to heaven, yet it ſeems only to change the name of *merit* for the name of *means*, and to explain theſe means by the ſame terms that import all that Papiſts underſtand by merit, namely, means of obtaining heaven in a federal, conditional and cauſal way; which is all they want to make their

works meritorious, so as to give right to the reward. So that in this act the merit of works is taught under another name; only the merit of Christ preferred thereto: which the *Romish* church also allows. The same author, *p.* 80. brings in the *Arminians* explaining the word *condition*, "Whose performance, "they say, may be called a mean or cause of salvation, and is "not only in itself full of grace, but grace is always necessary "for the enabling us to perform it, and the reward promised "thereto infinitely exceeds it." Again, they make it "that "which, being performed, is a means by which we attain to "what was on condition promised." Hence though, in opposition to *Antinomians*, orthodox divines, and such as have learned not to confound God's covenant of grace with his method of applying the blessings thereof, have allowed the word *condition*, when thereby is meant only conditions of order and connexion, according to the divine method of dispensing his promised blessings, one after another; yet, in opposition to *Papists*, *Arminians*, *Socinians*, and *Legalists*, they have justly rejected all legal conditions, such as federal and causal ones, which tend effectually to establish merit, tho' not under that name, and to confound gospel-grace with the law of works.

(2.) While it is said, that Christ's righteousness is necessary in the way of merit and purchase for obtaining the believer's right and title to heaven, even this way of speaking, as it is connected with the other, is far from being accurately evangelical; because it seems to cloud the doctrine of justification and sanctification, making them differ in that wherein they agree, or to agree in that wherein they differ.

(1.) It seems to make justification and sanctification to differ in that wherein they agree: for why are they represented so different, as if the title to heaven were owing to Christ's righteousness, and yet the possession of heaven were owing to some other cause? for, seeing the righteousness of Christ is necessary in the way of merit and purchase for the believer's obtaining holiness, and meetness for heaven, and for obtaining the possession of it also, as well as for obtaining the right and title to it; wherein then lies the difference between justification, by which he has the title to heaven, and sanctification, by which he has the meetness for it, either as to their relation to Christ's righteousness, by which they both are merited and purchased, or as to their relation to heaven, and the believer's possession of it, in so far as it is also a purchased possession? For the title to heaven, the meetness for it, and the possession of it, flow all alike from Christ's righteousness, as it is the meritorious and purchasing cause of each of them; which excludes every other federal

federal condition or causal influence, besides this righteousness, toward the possession of heaven. And hence,

(2.) It seems to make justification and sanctification agree in that wherein they differ, as if they did not differ in their material cause, any more than they do in their meritorious and purchasing cause: whereas yet the material cause of justification, which is also the federal condition of eternal life, is one of the main differences between justification and sanctification. But Mr. *Willison*'s account of this matter, from the act of Assembly, does herein confound justification and sanctification, as if they agreed in that wherein yet they mainly differ. Indeed this main difference between justification and sanctification I have not met with hitherto in Mr. *Willison*'s writings, that I remember of. However, as the material cause, or matter of sanctification, is not Christ's righteousness, but our own, not his imputed righteousness, but imparted righteousness, or implanted grace and holiness in heart and life; so the material cause of justification, is not our righteousness, but Christ's imputed righteousness itself, or his active and passive obedience in our room and stead, who is *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*. Our justification before God, and so our right and title both to grace and glory, stand not only upon the merit and purchase of that righteousness, as if it were only purchased thereby, but upon Christ's righteousness itself; which is the very matter of our justification; insomuch that the believer has no other legal or federal right or title to heaven, but that very righteousness of Christ with which he is clothed. When he has this, he has that which is the federal condition of eternal life, exclusive of all other federal conditions, or legal causes of it.

That in justification we have a right and title to heaven, and in sanctification a meetness for it, is most sound and orthodox: But then, by sanctification we enter into the possession of heaven, in so far as grace is glory begun; and our right and title to this glory is also our right and title to the possession of it, both here and hereafter. Hence they that believe, are said to *have everlasting life*, and *to enter into rest*, John iii. 36 Heb. iv. 3. This salvation, commenced here, and consummate hereafter, is what we obtain only by Christ's righteousness; which is the legal ground and the federal condition of our obtaining both a title to, and possession of this salvation, exclusive of all other legal grounds and federal conditions or causes thereof. And though one part of this salvation is introductory and preparatory to another, as grace to glory, by the order and ordinance of God; yet we have no other legal way of obtaining one part of this salvation, than we have of obtaining another. We have

no other right or title to glory hereafter, or the consummate possession of this salvation, than we have to grace here, which is the begun possession of it: neither has God in the law appointed one part of this salvation to obtain the other; as if grace and good works and holiness were the federal and conditional mean and cause of obtaining glory and happiness, or as if one part of this salvation, which is wholly purchased and promised in Christ, were the federal cause of obtaining another part of it: for the law acknowledges no good work for obtaining salvation, but such as founds a title to it before the Lord; and that is the doing and suffering work of the Surety, his law-magnifying work, or law-fulfilling righteousness, which is the federal condition and material cause of our justification and title to eternal life, both here and hereafter, as well as the meritorious and purchasing cause of it.

Sound divines have shunned, like fire, all expressions that savoured of making good works have any causal influence upon salvation. They have owned them to be *via ad regnum*, but not *causa regnandi*; the way wherein believers walk toward the kingdom, but not the cause of obtaining it. Our confession of faith to this purpose makes them the fruits and evidences of true and lively faith, and sufficiently expresses the necessity of them, in saying, "That by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruits unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life." Some, as *Cromayer*, affirm them to be necessary *ante*, though not *ad salutem*; that is, *before, but not unto salvation*. *Perkins*, on Christ's sermon on the mount, says, "Some Protestants hold them [to wit, good works] necessary, though not as the principal cause, (as they say we are justified and saved by Christ), yet as conservient causes of our salvation. But the truth is, [says he], they are no causes of salvation, neither efficient, principal nor conservient, nor yet material, formal or final; as has been elsewhere shewed." —— "Good works are necessary, not as causes of justification or salvation, but as inseparable consequents of saving faith in Christ, whereby we are justified and saved, or as a way is necessary to the going to a place." *Rutherford*, on the *Covenant*, *p.* 176. says, "Yea, but we are saved, that is, justified, and delivered from the obligation to wrath, by the works of free grace. He answers, Nay; but neither are we saved nor justified by these works of grace, as by means or causes; for we are first saved and justified, be-

"fore

" fore we can do good works: for good works are the fruits of " free grace, since we are his workmanship created in Christ " Jesus (and so justified and saved in Christ Jesus) to good " works, that we should walk in them." For which he refers to the learned commentator *Trochrig*, on *Eph.* i. 8, 9. Thus *Davidson*'s ordinary catechism, *p.* 46, 49. " We are perfectly " saved by the works whilk Christ did for us in his own per- " son, and na ways by the good works whilk he works in us " with and after faith. *Quest.* Rests there any thing for us to " do, after that we are perfectly justified in God's sight by " faith in Christ? *Answ.* Yes, very mickle; albeit na ways to " merit salvation, but only to witness, by the effects of thank- " fulness, that we are truly saved."

Mens owning Christ's righteousness to be the meritorious cause of justification, does not free them from the charge of maintaining justification by works, or (as the Apostle says, *Rom.* ix. 32.) *as it were by the works of the law*, while they do in any sense require another righteousness, distinct from that of Christ, in order to the *obtaining* the possession of that inheritance, of which believers have already *obtained* both the title and the begun possession, by the righteousness of Christ; *by whom* alone *God hath appointed them to obtain salvation*, 1 Thess. v. 9. 'Tis true, believers in Christ are obliged still to use the means of grace, and to seek after more and more meetness to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; which meetness they are also said to have already, and ought to be thankful to God for, *Col.* i. 12. But, when these means are required as federal conditions or causes of obtaining the possession of that inheritance, then this supposes a new federal paction, and necessarily imports such a confounding of justification and sanctification, as that, though his doctrine ascribes to Christ's justifying righteousness, the *merit of price and purchase*; yet at the same time it ascribes to our own sanctifying and qualifying righteousness, *the merit of paction*; and that because this doctrine either denies or conceals the *material cause* of justification, which is Christ's righteousness itself, and not merely what it hath merited and purchased. This righteousness of Christ, with which every true believer is clothed, is the only federal condition and cause of his obtaining the possession of heaven, even as it is the all and whole of the right and title he has to it.

The law of eternal life and death was irreversibly stated and declared only in the covenant of works; whereof the condition was perfect obedience, to which eternal life was promised, and the penalty in case of disobedience, was death, according

to

to the threatening thereof. And though we be changed, having by ſin forfeited the life promiſed, and incurred the penalty threatened, yet that covenant ſtands unchangeable. And as, by virtue of the ſtability of it, all the Chriſtleſs world are condemned, curſed, and die eternally; ſo, by virtue of its being perfectly fulfilled by Chriſt as our Surety, (in whom alone it ſtands faſt as a covenant of works to him, and of grace to us in him), whoſe obedience unto death was the only federal condition of the covenant of grace, anſwering both the DO and DIE of the covenant of works, all that are in him are freed from that condemnation, and live eternally; having in him, not only a legal ſecurity from death, to the honour of divine juſtice fully ſatisfied by his blood, as it is the *blood of atonement*, anſwering the penalty of the law in the threatening of death; but alſo a legal title to eternal life, to the honour of divine faithfulneſs fully cleared by the ſame blood, as it is *the blood of the covenant*; the ſhedding whereof on the croſs was the conſummate act of his obedience, anſwering the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, to the obedience whereof only life was promiſed, *Rom.* v. 12. to the end: inſomuch that the promiſe of life is not made to the believer's own perſonal obedience, nor to any work of his, except in ſo far as it is a fruit and evidence of his union to him, in whom all the promiſes of God are yea and amen to the glory of God, and to whom alone, or to whoſe obedience alone, the promiſes are all primarily and properly made. No other law was ever given to man with a promiſe of life annexed to the obedience of it, but that law which Chriſt came under in our room, *Rom.* iii. 21. *Gal.* iii. 21. and therefore there is no other obedience but Chriſt's can be the federal condition of eternal life, giving the federal right and title to it, and having a federal merit and cauſality for obtaining it. And hence, to ſpeak, as the Aſſembly's act 1722. does, of our works as a federal condition of obtaining heaven, and yet to alledge and aſſert, that it does not found a right and title to heaven, nor merit, no not in a federal way, notwithſtanding the performance of the federal condition, is a plain contradiction. The Popiſh doctrine above-mentioned is more conſiſtent with itſelf, while it aſcribes proper merit to what they reckon a proper condition of the new law or covenant of life by works, to which they turn the goſpel-covenant. From which premiſſes, if they could hold, their concluſion is native, that they truly merit by their works, and have federally a right and title to heaven. But the Aſſembly's act maintains the ſame premiſſes, relating to the federal conditionality of works to the obtaining of heaven, and yet denies the concluſion; alledging, they neither

neither merit, nor found a right and title: whereas that they do so federally, seems to be a native consequence of that doctrine; and to deny it, seems very absurd.

'Tis vain for Mr. *Willison* here to speak, as if no more was meant by that act, but that in justification we have a title, in sanctification a meetness for heaven: for, if that meetness is explained, by the Assembly's act, to be a federal condition and cause of obtaining heaven, and the possession of it, and yet that federal condition giving no federal right or title, nor having any federal merit upon performing of the condition, then it is, in my opinion, either irreconcileable with good sense, or else must import a twofold right and title to heaven; one by Christ's purchase, which the believer has in justification; and another by his own works and holiness in sanctification. These brethren therefore have more ado than they are aware of, ere they can clear that act of error and heterodoxy, and make it agreeable to, and consonant with gospel-truth. Nay, their attempting to do so, makes them necessarily confound the covenant of grace with the covenant of works, and justification with sanctification; while that act, and their explication of it hitherto, ascribes *more to sanctification* than belongs to it, namely, that the works it influences unto, have a federal conditionality for obtaining heaven; and also *less to justification*, than belongs to it, while therein the justifying righteousness of Christ is made only the meritorious purchasing cause of it, and of the believer's right and title to heaven, but not the material cause of it, as it is Christ's obedience in our room; the proper and federal condition of the covenant giving a federal right and title to eternal life, and that instantly and actually, whenever it is imputed to us, and received by faith. Justification stands upon a righteousness thro' which the grace of God reigns to the eternal life of believers, and to the honour of all God's other attributes: while here a merciful God provides both for his own honour as a *Lawgiver*, and also for the honour and credit of his *law*, that it might be magnified and made honourable: on which account *the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake*; wherein he has not only provided a satisfaction to his *justice* in clearing the penalty of the law, that threatened death to the transgressor; but also a vindication of his *holiness*, by a perfect obedience to the precept of the law; together with a manifestation of his *truth* and *faithfulness* in accomplishing the promise of life made to perfect obedience as the condition of it, which was to stand in the person of the *first Adam*, according to the covenant of works, but in the person of the Surety, the *second Adam*, according to the covenant of grace. Hence the believer's

ver's right and title to heaven, that he has in his new covenant head by juſtification, does not only nor properly ſtand upon that meritorious purchaſe, or merit and purchaſe they ſpeak of; but properly upon what they omit, the perfect obedience of Chriſt to the law as a covenant, giving them that right and title to life, according to the federal paction in their head, fulfilling the federal condition in their room and place.

But the Aſſembly's act, according to Mr. *Williſon's* gloſs upon it, having mentioned only the *meritorious* and *purchaſing cauſe* of juſtification, whereby Chriſt's righteouſneſs is ſuppoſed to *merit by price*, but paſſing over and concealing the *material cauſe* of it, which is Chriſt's righteouſneſs itſelf, or his obedience unto death, according to his covenant tranſaction with the Father in the coubcil of peace, and whereby he is known alſo to *merit by paction*, and ſo to obtain the poſſeſſion of eternal life promiſed only to his obedience, as the *ſecond Adam*, *Rom.* v. inſtead of this *material cauſe* of juſtification, and ground of obtaining the poſſeſſion of eternal life, the act of Aſſembly 1722 ſubſtitutes ſome other *righteouſneſs of our own*, under the name of *means*, having a federal conditionality, and ſome kind of cauſality in order to the obtaining the poſſeſſion of it; and ſo opens a door to *Papiſts*, *Arminians*, *Socinians*, and all *Legaliſts*, to bring in any material cauſe of juſtification they pleaſe, or any federal condition of obtaining the poſſeſſion of heaven they can find in themſelves, and their own holineſs and good works, provided Chriſt's righteouſneſs be reckoned neceſſary in the way of *purchaſe*, as they ſpeak, for obtaining the right and title to it. But, if Chriſt's righteouſneſs be alſo the material cauſe of juſtification, and the only federal condition and cauſe of obtaining the title to, and poſſeſſion of eternal life, then this doctrine of that act, which Meſſ. *Williſon* and *Currie* defend, will be found ſubverſive of the goſpel of the grace of God, reigning through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

However therefore Mr. *Williſon's* gloſs above mentioned may be judged tenible in itſelf; yet, as it is declared to have the ſame meaning with that foreſaid act, even in ſome of the moſt dangerous and untenible terms of it, his ſoundeſt expreſſions in defence thereof may be juſtly ſuſpected of an unſound meaning. For error can never be reconciled with truth; and he that attempts it, will but expoſe himſelf, and wrong wholſome truth with a mixture of poiſon. 'Tis impoſſible for Meſſ. *Williſon* and *Currie*, as long as theſe acts condemning ſo many precious truths ſtand unrepealed, to ſhut the door that has been opened thereby to *Arminian*, *Socinian*, and other errors. Before theſe brethren

brethren can vindicate that act of Assembly 1722, even in that point wherein they have judged it to be sound, they will find themselves obliged to defend these following points. (1.) That in the gospel, properly so taken, there are new precepts, such as particularly faith and repentance, that were never comprehended or required in the moral law, either directly, or by necessary consequence. (2.) That the law which believers are under, requires good works as a federal or conditional mean of, and as having a causality in order to the obtaining of glory, and yet gives no federal right or title to it. (3) That the law, as to the believer, is really neither divested of its promise of life, nor threatening of death. (4) That the believer ought to be moved to obedience by the hopes of enjoying heaven, or any good temporal or eternal, by his own obedience, as a federal conditional mean and cause thereof. These, and several other positions of the same import, the brethren have to defend, that design to reconcile that act with the truth of the gospel; in essaying whereof I doubt not but they will be found to kick against the pricks.

It was declared in the *Representation* given in against the act 1720, which was confirmed by the act 1722, That the 5th act of Assembly 1720 condemned the believer's plea in answer to the demand of the law as a covenant of works for *obtaining* salvation; namely, Christ's being his righteousness; and the 8th act, evidently in contradiction to that condemned doctrine of the *Marrow*, directs Ministers to preach the necessity of a holy life, in order to the *obtaining* of everlasting happiness; also, that the great doctrine of justification was laid down in such general terms as adversaries will easily agree to, without mentioning the righteousness of Christ, or the imputation of it, notwithstanding that a motion then was made, in open Assembly, for adding it. But, as the doctrine of free justification thro' the righteousness of Christ, is what *Luther* called, *Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ, the article of a standing or falling church*; so 'tis remarkable, that, since the time when this great article got such a dash by these acts of Assembly, the judicatures of this church, in their publick acts and administrations, have still been falling more and more deeply into the mire of error and defection. What matter of lamentation is it, that *Scotland* has in this respect lost the great name she had once a day, when famed abroad in the Christian world for her purity, zeal and constancy; and when a foreign divine wrote of her the following encomium!

Gens dilecta Deo, progressibus ardua sanctis,
Natio divinâ constabilita manu.

While the Associate Presbytery are attempting to do justice to truth, they are charged as guilty of doing injustice to the Assemblies of the established church: and particularly Mr. *Willison* says, *p.* 129. "That our censure against the Assembly's "doctrine is very unjust, and unbecoming the duty of children "to their mother." But as it is evident, we cannot do a greater act of justice, nay nor of kinder service to a church, than by endeavouring to do justice to truth, when any way injured by her; so we are sure, that our mother-church is only she that is the pillar and ground of truth: for in as far as she maintains and supports error, she is not a mother, but a murderer. Error was never the mother of one child of God to this day; for *of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.* Neither can it be supposed, that we are faithful to God, to his truth, to our vows and engagements, nor to our mother-church, but in a way of adhering to her covenanted principles, and cleaving to that part of the church of *Scotland* that are judicially asserting and witnessing for them. But Mr. *Willison* and Mr. *Currie* have thought fit (for which I pray the Lord may forgive them) to load our attempt this way, particularly our covenanting work, with the highest reproaches; and represent our oath, and bond itself, as stuffed with as many falsehoods as they please to enumerate. But, as I am sure, it were more easy for me to answer these unjust and wicked scribblings, than it is possible for me now to find time and leisure for it; so I doubt not but this will be done to better purpose by some other hand. We never expected but that our testimony for a covenanted reformation would indeed be *tormenting* to many *that dwell on the earth:* but that Mr. *Willison* and Mr. *Currie* should be among the number that were most vexed and galled with it, we would never have dreamed some time of day. But however they may gain their design, so far, by these their unworthy performances, as to occasion severals to take offence and stumble at the Lord's work among our hands; yet I doubt not but God will carry on his work which he hath begun, and hath remarkably hitherto advanced, tho' it is over their belly; and that this he will do to the glory of his own name, to the good and advantage of this and rising generations, and to the comfort of all the true-born children of this our mother-covenanted church of *Scotland.*

I might here notice the hideous outcry of these brethren against what they call our making *new terms of church communion* by that act of ours, *February* 14. 1744, which they represent as a NONSUCH one for sinfulness in a multitude of particulars; which will, I expect, be animadverted on elsewhere.

where. Therefore I shall only say in general, that, by enacting the renovation of our national covenants with a new bond suited to the times, no *new terms of church-communion* are enacted by us, but such as were made and exemplified to our hands by the church of *Scotland* in reforming times, an hundred years ago, by a Ministry as wise, faithful and zealous as any in our day, and surely much more so than the brethren that now have turned their back upon our covenanted reformation. If they own these covenants to be binding upon the Presbyterian church of *Scotland*, they so far own they are bound to the same *terms*, as well as we and our people. These things may seem *new* to most of this generation, that have been burying the reformation-work in oblivion; though in some of our congregations they cannot be reckoned so, wherein, at every baptismal engagement, the people have been put in mind thereof more than thirty years bygone. If these brethren have been, or are deficient this way, as well as the rest of the backsliding generation, it is no wonder that they cry out as if some *new* and strange thing were appearing. But their direct opposition to this work, under the notion of *new terms*, and their loading it with reproachful invectives, attempting to expose it as an enacting of *sinful terms* of communion, serve only to shew, how openly they are breaking God's bands, and casting his cords from them, to the stumbling and hardening of a perfidious generation, against which God is threatening a SWORD to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. If these brethren had cast but a favourable eye upon that foresaid act of Presbytery, they would have seen we made no absolute rule for our people therein, without an exception, excluding them all from sealing ordinances at the rights, that could not instantly see their duty in this matter; and that the act lays down rules of tenderness towards weaklings in the flock of Christ, if they do not evidence a malignant spirit of enmity against the work, but a friendly disposition thereto. But these things our censorious and inveighing brethren found not to their purpose to notice, when they were resolved to make the great work among our hands appear as odious as their pens were capable to do. But their work and ours both must come under another examination. *The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is*; and whether the materials wherewith they build upon the foundation laid in *Zion*, be *gold, silver and precious stones*, or *wood, hay and stubble*.

I shall now shut up this essay, by noticing the palpable falsehood Mr. *Willison* advances relating to the act 1722, confirming and explaining the act 1720, by which the *Marrow of mo-*

dern Divinity was condemned. He says, *p.* 128. " 'Tis sur-
" prising, that this heavy charge against that Assembly has
" been dormant for 22 years, until the most part of that As-
" sembly are in their graves; and that they did not openly
" complain of it at passing the act, but submitted, and lived
" quietly in the communion of the church so many years there-
" after." This I will demonstrate to be such a falsehood, that it is scarce to be supposed but Mr. *Willison* himself knows it to be so, otherwise his memory has mightily failed him: for not only was that act 1722 witnessed against in many sermons, preached and printed since that time, wherein the errors of it have been taxed doctrinally; but, immediately upon the passing that act, there was a solemn protestation entered against it in the face of that General Assembly, and a guinea of instrument-money thrown down upon the table, by the twelve brethren that were the representers against the act 1720: and tho' it was disregarded by that Assembly, and not marked in their records, (as many other protestations since that time, as Mr. *Willison* well knows underwent the same fate); yet it will stand in record against them elsewhere to rising generations; the tenor whereof follows.

At Edinburgh, May 21. 1722.

" THE General Assembly 1720 having, by their 5th act,
" intitled, *Act concerning a book*, intitled, *The Marrow*
" *of modern Divinity*, through an oversight, as we conceived,
" injured several precious gospel-truths; and, in their 8th act,
" intitled, *Act for preaching catechetical doctrine*, with direc-
" tions therein, proponed two heads of doctrine, in such man-
" ner of expression, as, in the situation of affairs caused by the
" said 5th act, was stumbling to us; we found ourselves ob-
" liged, for the regard we owe to the honour of God and to
" his precious truths, and for the exoneration of our own con-
" sciences, to give in unto the late Assembly's committee of Bills
" a representation and petition to that Assembly against the said
" 5th act, and some things stumbling to us in the 8th act afore-
" said; therein intimating, that there were several other grie-
" vances, important in themselves, and weighty to us, the
" which nevertheless, for brevity's sake, and the uncommon
" weight of the matter aforesaid, we were constrained to omit
" the representing of at that time; the which representation
" and petition being transmitted by the committee above-men-
" tioned

" tioned to the late General Assembly, they did refer the af-
" fair to their commission to prepare and ripen it for this As-
" sembly; and forasmuch as we did in a regular and orderly
" way give in our representation and petition aforesaid, and
" having attended the several meetings of the Commission
" since last Assembly, and, contrary to our inclinations, an-
" swered their queries, tending to widen the differences, and
" put to us by them, even after they had passed an overture,
" and therein made determinations upon the several heads of
" our representation; we have in the same orderly manner pro-
" secuted our said representation and petition, before the Re-
" verend Commission and this Venerable Assembly, and that,
" instead of obtaining redress, after the affair has been so long
" under deliberation, by the sentence of the General Assembly
" intimated to us, our representation and petition for repealing
" of the said 5th act of Assemby 1720 is refused, and the said
" act is confirmed, and no sufficient remedy provided for re-
" moving the offence given by the 8th act aforesaid, which
" gives us too much ground to think, that our moving in this
" manner for the redress of our other grievances will be in vain:
" THEREFORE we do, for the truth's sake, and our own ne-
" cessary vindication, declare and profess, before this Vene-
" rable Assembly, That we adhere to our standards of doctrine
" in this church, to the Confession of Faith ratified in parliament
" *anno* 1560, and the National Covenant, or Confession of Faith,
" both which we conceive we are bound to by the superadded
" tye of the Solemn League and Covenant; as also to the
" *Westminster* Confession, with the Larger and Shorter Cate-
" chisms; and that we are willing to subscribe the three Con-
" fessions aforesaid as the confessions of our faith; and parti-
" cularly the *Westminster* Confession, as it was received by this
" church *anno* 1647. And further, for reasons contained in
" our representation, and answers to the Commission's queries,
" both which we adhere unto, and for other reasons to be ad-
" ded, if need be, we do PROTEST, That we look upon the
" said 5th act of Assembly 1720 as contrary to the word of
" God, and to the aforesaid standards of doctrine and covenants;
" and on what we have complained of in the foresaid 8th act,
" as of dangerous consequence thereto: and that therefore we
" dare not any manner of way, no not by SILENCE, consent
" unto, or approve of them, nor the *acts of this Assembly relative*
" *thereunto*; and that it shall be lawful for us, agreeable to the
" word of God, and the standards of doctrine aforesaid in this
" church, to profess, preach, and still bear testimony unto the
" truths condemned, or otherwise injured by the said acts of
" Assembly,

" Aſſembly, notwithſtanding of the ſaid acts, or whatſoever " ſhall follow thereupon. Upon all which we take inſtru- " ments, and crave extracts."

Subſcribed by Meſſieurs

JAMES HOG,	Miniſter of the Goſpel at	*Carnock.*
WILLIAM HUNTER,		*Lilliesleaf.*
THOMAS BOSTON,		*Etterick.*
JONH WILLIAMSON,		*Inveresk.*
EBENEZER ERSKINE,		*Portmoak.*
GABRIEL WILSON,		*Maxton.*
JAMES KID,		*Queensferry.*
RALPH ERSKINE,		*Dunfermline.*
JAMES WARDLAW,		
HENRY DAVIDSON,		*Galaſhiels.*
JAMES BATHGATE,		*Orwel.*

Mr. BONNAR at *Torphichen* abſent.

This copy of our proteſtation, ſome time after it was given in to the General Aſſembly, was printed at *Edinburgh* that ſame year 1722; and may, I ſuppoſe, bear witneſs ſufficiently againſt the falſhood of Mr. *Williſon's* alledgeance, that we did not openly complain of it at the paſſing of that act. This proteſtation, as it here ſtands, was drawn up and ſigned with our hands before we were called in to the court; and after we underſtood, that inſtead of repealing the act 1720 they were confirming it: and though, as is ſaid in the proteſtation, the ſentence of the General Aſſembly was intimate to us before we entered that proteſtation; yet that ſentence was not ſo fully notified to us, as afterward it appeared enlarged in print, with the ſolemnity and ſeverity of the cenſures and warnings relating to that book, and us, as contained in that act; otherwiſe 'tis like it had been more uneaſy to us at that time: but the Moderator, in delivering the mind of the court, was more mild and moderate in his ſpeech to us, than to give us any occaſion to think the act would appear in publick in ſuch a harſh and rigorous form. Yet, knowing that no explication would ſalve the condemnation of truth, and that the 5th act 1720 was not repealed, but confirmed, and that no remedy ſufficient was provided againſt the injury done to truth by the 8th act, we openly proteſted in the foreſaid manner.

And whereas Mr. *Williſon* here ſays, " That this heavy " charge againſt that Aſſembly hath lien dormant, and that " we ſubmitted, and lived quietly in communion with the " church for many years thereafter:" I anſwer, That though matters were not come at that time to ſuch a height as to neceſ-

ſitate

ſtitate us to make a formal ſeceſſion from the judicatures, and to decline them, as afterwards we were obliged to do; yet, while our Reverend brother would have it believed, that after that act 1722 we ſubmitted to it, and maintained communion with the church in their ſubmiſſion to it, we can alſo demonſtrate the contrary, particularly by what follows. The Synod of *Fife*, among whom were five of us that were the repreſenting Brethren for ſeveral years after that act was paſſed, formed queſtions at their privy cenſures, for impoſing a compliance with, and obedience to that act 1722 upon the ſaid brethren, and made an act for a new ſubſcription of the Confeſſion of Faith, in conſequence of, and in an agreeableneſs to that act 1722, in order to bring all their members to an unanimous ſubmiſſion thereto: which we who were Repreſenters, unanimouſly refuſed; declaring, at the ſame time, our readineſs to adhere to, and renew our ſubſcription of the *Weſtminſter* Confeſſion and Catechiſms, as they were received by the church of *Scotland, anno* 1647; but by no means as they were by the Synod's act interpreted in an agreeableneſs to theſe acts of Aſſembly 1720 and 1722, in which we ſtill maintained ſo many precious truths were condemned and injured. Thus we alſo ſtood condemned by their acts, and had no communion with them in a way of ſubmiſſion thereunto; but remained, while this affair was in hand, not ſo much members of the court, as panels at the bar, obnoxious to whatever cenſure they might have inflicted for our diſobedience to their *acts*, and diſregard to their *inqueſts*, both in Presbyteries and Synods. Of which acts and inqueſts with reſpect to us, and all that were ſuſpected to be *Marrow-men*, as they were reproachfully called, there are abundance of ſtanding evidences yet in their records. And as our eſcaping the laſh of their higheſt cenſure was more owing to prudential conſiderations among members, than to the tendency of their acts; ſo the diſpoſition of the judicatures appeared too evidently, whenever any ſtudent or candidate was ſuppoſed to be tinctured with the *Marrow*, that is, of a goſpel-ſpirit, there was no quarters for ſuch: queries upon queries were formed to diſcourage them, and ſtop their way, either of being entered upon trials, or ordained unto churches; while thoſe that were of the moſt looſe and corrupt principles were univerſally moſt favoured and furthered. Theſe things are too notour to be denied. And theſe were ſome of the ſad, and yet laſting effects of the foreſaid acts of Aſſembly, and the ſad occaſion of planting many churches with men that were little acquainted with the goſpel, yea enemies to the doctrine of grace. Many pious youths of ſound goſpel-principles, to whom now a door

door is opened in holy providence among us, had the door of entrance into the Miniſtry quite barred againſt them; and we formerly fought many times as in an agony, and fought in vain, to have it ſet open to them.

But, to return from this digreſſion, I ſuppoſe it will be evident, from what I have ſaid, how much the good man was miſtaken, when he wrote down ſuch a groſs falſhood, as if that act 1722 had never been challenged till now, nor teſtified againſt, but that we had ſilently ſubmitted to it: which I think, for my part, would have been a very ſinful ſubmiſſion. So much am I of this mind, that I have reckoned it matter of thankfulneſs to God, that as I was a repreſenter and proteſter againſt theſe acts 1720 and 1722, ſo I have lived to ſee them judicially condemned.

And I think it is well ordered in providence, that Mr. *Williſon* hath publiſhed the above falſhood, as long as there is a ſufficient number of witneſſes yet living, to ſhew that it is ſo. And ſome of them perhaps have had, for this very end among others, their life prolonged to this time, that they might declare the truth in this matter, and that poſterity may not be impoſed upon with ſuch groſs falſhoods; which yet are ready to be the more credited, that they are conveyed under the hand-writing of one that was cotemporary with theſe occurrences, and that bore ſuch a conſiderable name in the church; even the Reverend Mr. *Williſon*, who is ſo well known by his many other writings; ſome whereof I hope have been very uſeful, and might have been more ſo, if he had not with his own hand intermixed with them, or added now to them ſeveral things that may contribute much to mar their uſefulneſs and reputation: for as the remarkable enumeration of his works he himſelf makes in a late bitter pamphlet, has not added ſo much to their reputation as it might have done from another hand; ſo every part or point of the doctrine delivered in theſe works has not been ſo univerſally ſwallowed down for ſound truth, as he may ſuppoſe. So true is the common maxim, *Nihil eſt ab omni parte beatum*. His preſent attack upon the goſpel-doctrine, defended and aſſerted in the Presbytery's act, has but revived the remembrance of his ſnarling long ago, in ſome of his writings, at the doctrine of the *Marrow of modern Divinity*, that book which God hath bleſſed for much good to many ſouls, and particularly was made the inſtrument of the great and worthy Mr. *Boſton*'s illumination; who had a ſpecial concern in the above-mentioned *Repreſentation* and *Proteſtation*, and whoſe learned treatiſes and evangelical writings will render

der his memory reſpected in the churches of Chriſt to the end of time.

What I have noticed above may ſhew, that the Reverend Mr. *Williſon*'s quarrel at ſome goſpel-truths, thro' the want of more inſight therein, is part of an old ſore. Which I notice, not from any diſregard to my Reverend brother, for whom I have for a long time had a very great reſpect, but to ſhew the greater regard I have and owe to the truth as it is in Jeſus, and that the generation may not be too much ſurpriſed at the aſſault he makes againſt the truth and teſtimony among our hands, as if he had found ſome new point of doctrine among us, againſt which he never liſted a pen before; but that it may appear, that as he ſeems conſiſtent enough with himſelf now and formerly, ſo we are acting a part conſiſtent with ourſelves, cleaving to the very ſame national covenants, and maintaining the very ſame goſpel-principles we ſo openly aſſerted and contended for this time 24 years, when the foreſaid act 1720 was paſſed. As truth is the ſame it was, ſo our teſtimony for it, under whatever different circumſtances, is the very ſame it was then. But as this new attack theſe brethren have made upon our covenanting work, and the goſpel-doctrine contained in the late act of the Aſſociate Presbytery, particularly in their defence of the foreſaid act of Aſſembly 1722, will never add much to the reputation of their other doctrinal writings among thoſe that underſtand the goſpel; ſo they and we both will ſhortly have our honour laid in the duſt: But truth will live, when we die, and ſtand triumphant to riſing generations, notwithſtanding all the dirt of calumny and darts of cruelty thrown at it in this generation.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING, in the beginning of this *Appendix*, made mention of the marks of a ſaving work, in oppoſition to deluſion, as I had opened them up in the letter, intitled, *Fraud and Falſhood diſcovered*, I ſhall cloſe this *Appendix* with the republiſhing of theſe marks; not only becauſe I referred to them as above, but alſo in regard many complained, that too few copies of that letter were printed; and this may be reckoned a more uſeful part of that letter than the reſt of the controverſy contained therein. But, before I come to rehearſe them, leſt ſome be ignorant of the occaſion that led to the manner wherein they are expreſſed in that pamphlet, it is not amiſs that here they be informed thereof.

Mr. *John Weſley*, in *Auguſt* 1739, having given me an account of the ſtrange effects of his miniſtry, I wrote a letter to him, expreſſing my thankfulneſs to God for what I thought then was good, according to the relation ſent me; noticing

alſo what I thought was deluſive and diabolical; and likewiſe gave marks of a work I reckoned was truly divine and ſaving. The Reverend Mr. *Alexander Webſter* thought fit, in a poſtſcript to a ſecond edition of his letter, intitled, *The divine influence of the work at Cambuſlang*, &c. *illuſtrated*, to reprint a falſe and mutilated copy of that letter of mine, (that had been printed, without my knowledge, in Mr. *Weſley's* journal at *London*), as what he judged, it ſeems, would do ſervice to the cauſe he defended, namely, the work at *Cambuſlang*, and expoſe me as one of thoſe that condemned that work; while yet he imagined, that, by that letter, I had juſtified and approven of it, as it appeared in *England*, ſome years before, under Mr. *Weſley's* miniſtry. This obliged me, in the pamphlet, intitled, *Fraud and Falſhood diſcovered*, to give a fair repreſentation of that ſtory in its various circumſtances, ſhewing how unjuſtly I was accuſed, and how my letter was curtailed and mutilated, and the marks I gave therein of a ſaving work, were quite left out *; which I opened in the following manner.

"BUT

* *Whether Mr.* Weſley *or Mr.* Webſter *was the mangler of my letter, I could not then know, till the pamphlet was out of my hand in the printer's, as I ſhew in that book. After it was publiſhed, Mr.* Webſter, *in a letter directed to me, heavily charged me with diſhoneſty, in not vindicating him from the charge of that fraud and falſhood, becauſe, ſome time before that pamphlet was publiſhed, I had occaſion to know (by ſeeing Mr.* Weſley's *journal) that he was not guilty of that vitiation. But it ſeemed ſtrange to me, how he came to expect I ſhould juſtify him in a matter wherein I had never condemned him, without ſuppoſing it might be his author that was chargeable therein; which made it needleſs for me to purge him, any farther than I actually did, from that charge, by an advertiſement at the end of the pamphlet. Nor did he deſerve at my hand any other apology in his favours; when, though I came to underſtand he was not the falſifier, yet I knew he was the republiſher of that falſe and fraudulent copy, and that with a falſe and fraudulent-like deſign, of extolling his darling work by expoſing and defaming me as ſelf condemned; and for what? Even for having ſome other opinion of certain men and their work, than I own I had. A mighty project indeed, for ſupporting what was proclaimed to be divine! But, as my principles in theſe matters have been ſtill the ſame, ſo, why I had other ſentiments of theſe men and their applauded work than at firſt, I gave ſufficient, and, I think, unanſwerable reaſons in that pamphlet. To which Mr* Webſter's *letter was ſo far from being an anſwer, that though therein he employs his invention to make both the falſe and the true copy of my*

letter

"BUT what I mainly intended for discovering a saving work, and detecting a delusive one, was in the two following passages of my letter.

The *first* relates to the progress of the good work, whether it begin more quickly or slowly, That yet *it is carried on gradually, with a word now and a word then impressed upon them that are the subjects of it, and some outpourings of the Spirit now and then, and by farther degrees of illumination and divine teaching, till by little and little they come to more establishment in the faith*; and that hence the saving issue of the work *comes to be known at sundry times and divers manners.* Now, Mr. *Wesley*, speaking even of those whose bodies were so dreadfully actuated by some evil spirit, says, that *of these, many are in that hour filled with peace and joy.* This to me (however similar to the work we heard lately of in the West of *Scotland* in many instances) had such a bad appearance to me, even at that time, as occasioned the foresaid passage; wherein I give such an example, from these whom I reckoned true converts among us, as might caution him even against accounting any work to be solid and saving that appeared in flashes of sudden sorrows and joys, terrors and comforts: for such sudden changes I suspected to be nothing for ordinary but mere delusions." This passage therefore, I think, ought not to have been kept out of my letter, when it was published by Mr. *Wesley* or Mr. *Webster*, in regard I take *spiritual growth and progress in the Lord's way, under the influence of divine teaching by the word and Spirit of God, unto more and more establishment in the faith*, to be one of the distinguishing marks given in scripture of a saving work, in opposition to what is delusive: For *the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. He that is of clean hands, waxeth stronger and stronger; he goes from strength to strength; he forgets things that are behind, and presses forward to the mark*, &c. whereas, to save men *per saltum*, is not God's usual way, says Mr. *Hooker* upon *Acts* ii. 37. where also he has these following words: *The easy and sudden conversion of such as*

 have

letter to answer his purpose; yet, as I said elsewhere, they that read over my defence in that pamphlet, will see every particular of his letter answered and anticipated, except some satyrical and bantering flights, so much out of the road of manners and compliment, as neither became the younger brother to relate, nor the elder brother to retort. On all these accounts I gave no answer to his letter: nor would I have taken notice of it at present, if it had not fallen in my way, when seeking the occasion of giving these marks of a saving work, in opposition to delusion, and of relating them in the way and circumstances wherein they are delivered in the said pamphlet.

have lived scandalously, gives just ground of suspicion why they may question the truth of the work, and others justly suspect it, unless their judgments be settled by sad proof, long experience, and that upon serious observation; and again, *Out of the depth of profaneness to come to the height of holiness at unawares, it is a work of delusion, and not of true conversion to God.* He has a great deal more there to the same purpose, which for brevity's sake I do not transcribe. Now, the applauded work of Mr. *Webster* and Mr. *Wesley* does not, it seems, love to be tried by this touch-stone, which I, even in an indirect way, but hinted at to Mr. *Wesley*; otherwise why should this part of my letter to him be concealed?

Secondly, Another sign and mark of a divine and saving work, which you'll see was plainly set down in my letter to Mr. *Wesley*, and which Mr. *Webster*'s copy of it wants, is this, namely, When the converts *are brought off from all confidence, not only in their own works and duties in point of justification before God, but also from all confidence in, and dependence upon their best frames, tears, enlargements, influences and attainments, to a solid life of faith upon the grounds that are unchangeable*, viz. *the promise of God, the righteousness of Christ, the grace and fulness that is in him*, &c. When I wrote this to Mr. *Wesley*, I did not know there was so much need of it, and so little need of expunging it out of the copy of my letter, as now I see there is, when so much of a delusive, enthusiastick spirit is afoot, leading poor souls to rest upon impulses, impressions, motions, and what they feel within them, as if these were to be the ground and reason of their faith and hope: whereas the true feeling and sealing of the Spirit is the fruit and effect of faith: *After ye believed ye were sealed*, Eph. i. 13. and the true Spirit of God within the believer leads him to a dependence upon Christ without him in the word of grace and promise, and not upon a Christ within him, nor upon any created or communicated graces, gifts, experiences, tears, sorrows, joys, frames, feelings, or whatever else that is not God himself in Christ, exhibited in the covenant of promise. This is a mark and sign of a work that is divine and saving, which I see not expressed nor imported in any of these, that either Mr. *Webster*, or any other, has mentioned to prove their presently applauded work to be so. Though some may think, that what they say about the converts they mention, their believing in Jesus Christ, and resting on him, &c. may import the mark I here give; yet those that are acquaint with the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and partly of the hearts of others, may know, that it is no rare thing to find such believers in the world, whose faith in Christ is grounded on their faith, and whose feelings of such

and

and such inward motions and operations is the ground of that ground: and so it is not the true God himself in a word or testimony, but the God they feel, or have felt within them, they rest upon; which is not true faith, but mere fancy. Mr. *Shepherd*, upon the *parable*, *p.* 198. citing 2 *Thess.* i. 10. *He shall be admired in all them that believe*; why? *because our testimony was believed*, adds, *That faith which closes with, and sees Christ in a testimony, is that whereby Jesus shall be admired at the world's end.* The foresaid mark of a saving work is supported by a multitude of scriptures, if it be not rather the scope of the whole Bible to shew that God himself in Christ, exhibit in the word, and none else, nothing else, nothing besides him, nothing from him, nothing with him, must be the ground of our faith, trust and confidence. To illustrate this from scripture, would swell this missive to a volume: those that please may at their leisure consult 2 *Chron.* xx. 20. *Psal.* xviii. 1. 2. and lxii. 5. 6. 7. 8. and lxxi. 16. and lxxxix. 16. 17. *Isa.* ii. 11. 17. 20. and xxvi. 3. 4. and xl. 6. 7. 8 29. 30 31. and xlv. 22. 23. 24. 25. and l. 10. and lxiv. 6. *Jer.* ii. 35. 37. and iii. 22. 23. and ix. 23. 24. *Ezek.* xvi. 14. 15. *Hos.* xiv. 1. 3. *Luke* xvi. 15. and xviii. 9. *Rom.* i. 17. and iii. 19. 20. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. and iv. 5. and viii. 34. and x. 3. 4. 8. 17. 1 *Cor.* i. 29. 30. 31. *Ephes.* vi. 10. *Philip.* iii. 3. 7. 8. 2 *Tim.* ii. 1.

As saving knowledge empties a man of his own knowledge, making him in his own eyes *more brutish than any man, and not having the understanding of a man*; so living faith empties him of his own faith. Many hope to be saved; why? Because they trust in God; and so it is not God, but their own faith and trust in him, they hope upon. But true evangelical faith of divine operation, leaves the man that has it nothing to lean upon but Christ in a bare word, a *Thus saith the Lord*; it leaves him nothing in all the world to hang by, but the girdle of God's loins, *Isa.* xi. 5. the faithfulness of a promising God, a divine testimony: it leaves him neither righteousness nor strength in himself, that he may come to the proper language of faith, saying, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*: it leaves him *wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked*, that he may prize only the *tried gold*, the *white raiment*, and the *eye-salve*, that Christ has to give him: it leaves him quite destitute of, and denied to all good in himself, that he may have nothing but what he has in Christ. Of such Christ says, *Blessed are the poor: To this man will I look, even to him that is poor.* "Take the best hypocrite, (says Mr. "*Shepherd* in his *Sincere Convert*), that hath the most strong per- "suasions of God's love to him, and ask him why he hopes to be "saved? he will answer, I pray, read, hear, love good men, cry "out

" out of the ſins of the time: and tell him again, that an hy-
" pocrite may climb theſe ſtairs, and go as far, he will reply,
" True indeed; but they do not what they do with a ſound
" heart, but to be ſeen of men. Mark now, how theſe men
" feel a good heart in themſelves, and in all things they do;
" and therefore feel not a want of all good, which is poverty of
" ſpirit: and therefore here they fall ſhort." Such is their deluded caſe, that depend upon their feelings, and reſt content with flaſhes of joy and ſorrow in duties and ordinances, having their hearts joyfully affected with the ſweetneſs, or dreadfully affected with the ſadneſs of a truth or doctrine they hear. But, as Mr. *Burgeſs* ſays, *Fine head-notions may produce ſome affectionate heart-motions; but what ſymptom of grace in this? We may love a choice truth, as a man may be enamoured with a fair face.* One may be joyfully affected with a pleaſant comedy, and as grievouſly affected with a bloody tragedy. A lively repreſentation of the death and paſſion of Chriſt, may move the paſſions of a man to a bitter weeping; and yet ſo little of religion is here, that Chriſt forbids ſuch weeping, *Weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children.* The matter delivered, or a ſweet ſubject, may pleaſe the intellectuals; the manner of delivery, or a powerful utterance, may ſatisfy the affections, and move them: and yet all this while a man no more wrought upon divinely, or in a ſpiritual way, than the *Roman* auditors when they heard *Tully*'s orations. The devil, after he has frighted ſouls as an angel of darkneſs, transforming himſelf next into an angel of light, joy and comfort, does moſt incurably deſtroy. The man that feels peace, joy and comfort in a falſe way, is in the moſt dangerous condition; becauſe here the affections are ſo ſenſibly touched, and the thing looks ſo like unto true grace, that it is eaſier to convince one of the weakneſs and unſoundneſs of all other ſigns than of this.

But God's ſaving work is not only a *filling work*, giving people grace, holineſs, humility, the ſpirit of prayer, faith, love, joy, repentance, zeal, *making all things new*; but alſo an *emptying work*, which is the great myſterious part of religion, whereby God ſhakes a man out of all his religion and righteouſneſs, natural or gracious, in point of dependence, and *makes all things nothing*, that God in Chriſt may be all in all. God is a *Spirit*, an infinite, eternal, unchangeable Spirit; and all things beſide him are but *fleſh*, an arm of fleſh; and no man is brought to true religion towards God, till brought *off from all confidence in the fleſh*, Philip. iii. 3. *Iſa.* xl. 6. 7. 8. God is *being* itſelf, I AM THAT I AM is his name; all things beſide him are *nothing* originally, and, if he pleaſe, reducible to nothing. To truſt then in any thing beſide God, is to truſt in

that

that which is not; to defert *being*, and depend on *nothing*, or rather on that which is *leſs than nothing and vanity*, Iſa. xl. 17. yea worſe than either of theſe, *Iſa.* xli. 24. *Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought:* which, according to the margin, may be read, *Behold, ye are worſe than nothing, and your work worſe than of a viper.* To ſee Chriſt himſelf, and believe in him, is but idolatry, fancy and deluſion, if we do not ſee God in him, and believe in God by him, *John* xiv. 6. 9. 1 *Pet.* i. 21.

That ſaving faith that will abide the trial of death and judgment, can only ſtand upon ſuch everlaſting and immutable grounds as I mentioned in my letter, namely, the word and promiſe of God, which is everlaſting, 1 *Pet.* i. 23. 24. 25. the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is everlaſting, *Dan.* ix. 20. being the righteouſneſs of God, and of him who is *Jehovah Tzidkenu, Rom.* i. 17. *Jer.* xxiii. 6. and the grace and fulneſs that is in Chriſt, which is alſo the grace and fulneſs of God, and everlaſting, not as it is in the ſtream, and communicated to us, and ſo may ſoon dry up, but as it is in the ſpring and fountain, God himſelf in Chriſt, in whom God and all his grace and fulneſs ever dwells, *Col.* i. 19 and ii. 9. To reſt upon theſe grounds, is to reſt upon the eternal God himſelf, the Rock of Ages, and to be like unto mount *Zion*, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever, *Pſal.* cxxv. 1.

Such are the remains of corruption, even in thoſe that are true converts, and ſo powerful is the legal bias of their hearts, leading them to reſt upon their duties, graces, frames, feelings and enjoyments, that oftimes it may require many years trial and probation, ere they come to know themſelves, and whether God only is their reſting-place: ſo that it is not ſuch a proper queſtion, to inquire *what they feel?* as *where they ſtand?* if it is upon a ground on which they ſhall be able to ſtand in judgment, and ſtand to eternity? As, when Chriſt ſuffered, the juſt for the unjuſt, it was *to bring us to God*; ſo, when the Spirit is ſent, there is nothing wherein his gracious operation and ſaving power is more exerted from time to time, than in *bringing ſinners to God*, by ſweeping away all their refuges of lies, and deſtroying all their falſe confidences in any thing whatſoever that is not God. It is no eaſy matter indeed, but a work of omnipotence, to be thus brought unto God. The power of Satan, on the other hand, is not put forth more any way in all the world, than by leading men to truſt and confidence in any thing, be it duties, frames, feelings, or whatever elſe, providing he can keep them back from ſuch a faith in Chriſt as terminates upon God, and all the glorious attributes of God in him, according to the goſpel-plan of divine grace, reigning

reigning through his righteouſneſs to eternal life. If Satan has power, he will never ſuffer a man to come thus to God, and to God only. Hence the ſaving efficacy of the goſpel, when accompanied with the power of the Spirit of God, is expreſſed by a *turning* men *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts xxvi. 18. Chriſt, as Mediator, is only the *great ordinance of God*, for reſtoring a number of loſt ſinners, and redeeming them *to God* by his blood; or *the way* by which unholy ſinners are brought back again to a holy God, as the only centre of their reſt: to which the more they come, the more holy they are; and to which if they never come, they have never any true holineſs, true religion, nor true converſion. Hence, as people may be converted to duties, and yet not to Chriſt, ſo they may be converted to Chriſt, and yet not to God by him, nor truly turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

None of theſe marks, graces or qualifications, mentioned by Mr. *Webſter* to be among theſe whom he takes to be converts, are of a ſaving nature, if they be not accompanied with that faith which empties the ſoul of them all, in point of truſt, confidence and dependence on them: for theſe are but ſtreams, God is the fountain; and he will not give his glory to created ſtreams, ſo as to ſhare with him as the ground and object of our truſt. Nothing indeed is more eaſily or commonly ſaid by people than this, *We truſt in God; we believe in Chriſt*: but, if our faith in Chriſt be built upon our feelings, we diſhonour the fountain, deify the ſtreams, and delude our own ſouls with a fancy inſtead of faith.

This mark of a divine and living work, even as I laid it in my letter to Mr. *Weſley*, is ſo eſſential and diſcriminating, that without it no other mark can be ſaving. Let a man ſeem to have all the marks Mr. *Webſter* mentions in his letter, for ſhewing the work he ſpeaks of to be divine; yet, if this one be quite wanting, the work is deluſive, and not divine.

Yea let perſeverance be added to theſe marks he aſſigns to his new converts, and let it be ſuppoſed they hold on in all theſe for a good many years, or a whole lifetime; yet I don't ſee, without this that I have mentioned, that that would prove there is no deluſion in the caſe: for as I find the deluded young man in the goſpel had notable perſeverance in excellent ways, when he ſaid, *All theſe things have I done from my youth up, what lack I yet?* ſo I find moſt of theſe we call *Quakers* perſevering all the days of their life in a very ſober, religious, and ſeemingly devout way; yet, till I loſe my Bible, I cannot find ſo much charity for them, as to think they are true converts, and under no deluſion."

F I N I S.

Everything from here to the end of the book was added from the 1805 Philadelphia edition.

SWRB

THE

TRUE CHRIST, NO NEW CHRIST.

A SERMON,

Preached on Monday, August 9, 1742, after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Abbotshall.

BY THE REV. RALPH ERSKINE,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AT DUNFERMLINE.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

HEB. XIII. 8.

The True Christ, no New Christ.

HEB. xiii. 8.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

MY friends, we live in changeable times, amidst this changeable world. Many, now a-days, are tempted to change their mind and manners, to change their principles and practice, from better to worse; and the changes amongst many ministers and professors are very strange and alarming. Outward changes are passing over us all every day. Yesterday is gone, and we will never see it again; this day is going. Where shall we get an unchangeable ground to build upon, and to take rest to our souls in, amidst all changes both of our outward lot and inward frame? Why, here it is, *Christ the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.*

The words may be considered, 1. In themselves. 2. In their connection.

If you view them in themselves, you have therein a description of our glorious Redeemer, who is here described (1.) In his office, he is Jesus, a Saviour. (2.) In his unction, he is Christ, the Anointed, and appointed to this saving work, (3.) In his Identity and Immutability, he is *the same*; and this sameness of Christ is described under a threefold period, past, present, and to come; 1. The same yesterday. 2. The same to-day. 3. The same for ever. Of which more afterwards.

Again, if we view these words in their connection, we find indeed there is no particle of connection or relation in this text, to direct us to the dependence of it upon that which goes before or follows; yet the very subject matter of it evidently shews, that it hath a fit reference both to the verse before and to the following. In the former verse, the Hebrews are directed to follow the faith of their spiritual guides which had been before them: and this verse lays down a forcible reason to move them thereunto, and the reason is taken from the object of their faith, namely CHRIST, who remains still the same object of faith; and therefore it behoves those that survive the believers now gone to glory, to follow that same faith, which objectively is *Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-*

day, and for ever. In the following verse we are dehorted from following diverse and strange doctrines; and a strong reason to enforce that dehortation is laid down in this verse, namely, That Jesus Christ, who is the foundation and substance of all sound doctrine, continues always the same, so as they have no cause to be carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. I propose then to consider this text, not only in itself, but in its connection; and shall endeavour to explain it, in the prosecution of this doctrine.

OBSERV. That it is always necessary, especially in shaking times, wherein faith is endangered, by new and strange doctrines, to know and believe that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.*

The view of Christ's immutability in himself, and in his truth, without variation, will influence Christian stability in the faith, without wavering. It is a proper mean of stability in the faith, in shaking times, to consider, that, *Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* You may read some parallel scriptures for confirming and establishing your faith of this doctrine. See what a time it was with the Psalmist, Psal. cii. 8, 9, 10. "Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath; for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." Then see what consideration he is led to, ver. 12, 13. "But thou O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come. Ver. 25—28. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." To this purpose, see Isa. li. 7, 8. See also Lam. v. 16—19. Again, how is John comforted and supported in the time of his banishment, and in the prospect of perilous times coming upon the church, but with this name of Christ in other words? Rev. i. 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The method I propose for handling this subject, through divine aid, is the following:

I. We would shew the import of this immutable sameness and identity that is ascribed unto Christ here; or what is imported in his being the same yesterday, to-day, and and for ever.

II. Enquire wherein, or in what respects he is the same.

III. Speak of the necessity of knowing this, especially in shaking times, wherein the faith of many is endangered by new and strange doctrines; or, why it is necessary, then especially, to know and believe that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

IV. Make application of the whole subject.

I. As to the import of this name here given to Christ, which is also, to the same purpose, given him, Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. Here, in the text, you have three distinctions of time, wherein Christ is said to be the same, viz. *Yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

1. The same yesterday. This word is sometimes taken properly, for the day immediately before; as when it is said, John iv. 52. "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him; and Acts vii. 28. "Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday." Sometimes figuratively, for the time past, whether it consists of many days or years; as when it is said, Mic. ii. 8. "Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy." OF LATE, in the margin it is *yesterday*; that is, some time ago. Sometimes it signifies of old, whether as to time or eternity; thus, Isa. xxx. 33. "Tophet is ordained of old; in the margin it is *yesterday*. Hence he is the same yesterday. Under this may be comprised all the time wherein Christ stayed upon earth; all the time from his incarnation till that present time wherein the apostle wrote; all the time wherein Christ was typified in the Mosaical rites, to that wherein these were abolished; all the time that hath past from the first promise made of Christ, Gen. iii. 14.; all the time from the beginning of the world to this day, yea, and eternity itself, as it consists in the expression of *from everlasting*; for, Mic. v. 2. "His goings forth were of old, from everlasting. Prov. viii. 23. I was set up from everlasting."

2. The same to-day. This is the next distinction, and signifies the present time, to distinguish it from the former times. Thus yesterday may signify former times, before Christ was exhibited in the flesh; and to-day, the time since his incarnation; for the word, to-day, is not always strictly meant of a set day, consisting of twelve or twenty-four hours, but may have a long date; as when the Psalmist had said, Psal. cxv. 7. "To-day if ye will hear his voice:" The apostle, who lived above a thousand years after him, applies that to his own

times, Heb. iii. 13. "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day." Christ is the same yesterday under the Old Testament, and the same to-day in the New Testament dispensation: the same from the beginning to his incarnation, and the same from thence to the end of the world; and so,

3. The same for ever; that is, even in the largest sense, from everlasting to everlasting he is the same. "His throne is for ever and ever; and of his dominion there is no end." Change of time, past, present, and to come, makes no change in him, for he is the same. Thus Christ is here set out, as in Rev. i. 4. "Which is, and which was, and which is to come."

4. To each of these relates this sameness and identity. The word rendered *the same*, signifies *he himself;* and implies, that he is ever himself, without any alteration or change, pointing out his immutability. There is no tautology or vain repetition in these words, though each of them point at his immutability; for his being *the same yesterday*, points out his eternity before time; *the same for ever*, points out his perpetuity to everlasting. Christ who is the good old way, is also the new and living way, and will always be the way of the redeemed.

His eternal deity is here pointed out, being not only, as God, without beginning and without end, but also without possession: *Christ Jesus, the same yesterday to-day, and for ever;* What is that, but just *I am that I am:* yesterday *I am*, "Before Abraham was I am?" I am yesterday, I am to-day, I am for ever: intimating, a perpetual continuing to be the same. Thus Isa. xli. 4. "I the Lord the first, and with the last I am he;" or, as some translate it, 'I am the same;' for it is the same word both in the Hebrew and the Greek, that is there translated *he*, and here translated *the same;* see Jam. i. 17. "With whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning;" no show or appearance of alteration.

II. The second thing proposed was, To show wherein he is the same, And,

1. He is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever, in respect of his divine essence; for, "From everlasting to everlasting he is God," Psal. xc. 2. See Heb. i. 11, 12. "They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

2. He is the same immutably in his counsels. We read, Heb. vi. 17. of the immutability of his counsel. Psal. xxxiii. 10. "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; he maketh the devices of the heathen of none effect. The

counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Prov. xix. 21. "There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand."

3. He is the same in his attributes. Psal. cxviii. 1. "His mercy endures for ever. Psal. cxvii. 2. His truth endures for ever." Thus his love is everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3. and "His righteousness endures for ever," Psal. cxi. 3. And so it may be said of all his other attributes and properties.

4. He is the same in his word, Isa. xl. 6. compared with 1 Pet. i. 25. "All flesh is grass," &c. but "The word of the Lord endures for ever." This is manifest both in the law, 'Not one title shall fail,' Luke xvi. 17. and in the gospel, which is therefore called the everlasting gospel, Rev. xiv. 6.

5. He is the same in his bonds, whereby he binds himself to us in the new covenant. As the covenant is an everlasting covenant, so these bonds of his promise and oath are unalterable, inviolable, and immutable, called the two immutable things, by which it is impossible for him to lye, Heb. vi. 18.

6. He is the same for ever in his divine personality. Indeed *the word was made flesh*, John i. 14. and he took on him our nature, which he did in the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4. and he made himself of no reputation, or brought himself to nothing, Phil. ii. 6, 7.: therefore immutability, attributed to Christ, is properly meant of his divine nature, which was nowise altered by assuming the human nature; for he became man, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; so as he remained in his divine nature, when he was incarnate, the very same he was before, without addition, diminution, or alteration; yet even in regard of his human nature, being raised from the dead, he dies no more, Rom. vi. 6. "He continues for ever, and ever lives," Heb. vii. 25. and 'He lives for ever more,' Rev. i. 18. And hence,

7. He is the same for ever, in his Mediatorship, and in his mediatorial offices. In his prophetical office he is stiled an everlasting light, to instruct and direct his people, Isa. lx. 17, 20. In his priestly office, he is called a priest for ever, Psal. cx. 4.; and it is said, "He ever lives to make intercession; and it is called an unchangeable priesthood. In his kingly office he is the same for ever; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Heb. i. 8. As king, he shall reign for ever and ever; and, "There shall be no end of his kingdom, Luke i. 33. The government is on his shoulders," Isa. ix. 6.

8. He is always the same in the merit, virtue and efficacy of what he did and suffered for our redemption. In this respect he is called the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. The virtue of his blood was the same before it was

shed for the remission of the sins of believers of old, as it is since it was shed. Hence he is the same object of faith, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. John iii. 14. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up—ver 15. That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life—ver. 16. For God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." He ever was, is, and will be the same mean of salvation: "There is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus," Acts iv. 12. He ever was, is, and will be the same foundation to his church; "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11.

9. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, in the identity and sameness of the faith of all true believers in all ages. Abraham's faith was such a faith as that of Christians is, and their faith such a faith as his was: see Rom. iv. 11 and Gal. iii. 7, 8. And, being the same in respect of his people's faith in him who is the Head, that body of his people, whereof he is the Head, must continue for ever. If the Head is for ever, the body must be for ever; and on this ground it is that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the church. Mat. xvi. 18.

10. He is always the same in his truth, in opposition to all error, and diverse or strange doctrines. This seems especially to be here intended, as appears by the preceding and succeeding contexts: "Follow their faith who were your guides," says the texts before; "Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines," say the following words. The doctrine of faith is still the same; and therefore diversity and strangeness of doctrine is opposed to the identity and sameness of Christ, whose truth is still the same in all respects. It has still the same centre, Jesus Christ, in whom all the lines meet, John xvi. 6. 2. It hath still the same worth and value, so as they that buy the truth may never sell it. 3. It hath still the same nature. Truth is still truth, and cannot be a lye. 4. It hath still the same sound, which is sweet and joyful; and, "Blessed are the people that hear the joyful sound." 5. It hath still the same virtue when known, namely, to set at liberty: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 6. It hath still the same relation to God, who is the God of truth; to Christ who is the Way and the Truth; and to the Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth. 7. It hath still the same end and tendency, to declare, when it is asserted, the glory of the God of truth, and to show forth his perfections. 8. It hath still the same immutable duration in Christ, who is *the truth*, and who *is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.*

III. The third Head propoſed, Is to ſpeak of the neceſſity knowing and believing this, That *Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, day and for ever*, at all times, when faith is endangered by ge and ſtrange doctrines. Here I would ſhew, 1. The ceſſity of it at all times. 2. The ſpecial neceſſity of it at ch a ſhaking time.

ſt. The neceſſity of knowing and believing this at all times, hat, *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever.* nd,

1. It is neceſſary for diſtinguiſhing Chriſt from all creatures, nd from all idols of the nations, and from all falſe Gods and ſe Chriſts. Thus Iſa. xli. 4. He is diſtinguiſhed from all ch by this name; "I the Lord, the firſt, and with the laſt, am he;" and Iſa. xliv. 6. "Thus ſaith the Lord, the King Iſrael, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hoſts, I am the firſt, nd I am the laſt, and beſides me there is no God."

2. It is always neceſſary for evidencing Chriſt to be the ue God: Mal. iii. 6. "I am the Lord, I change not; there- re ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed." To be the eternal nd unchangeable God, the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for er; and ſo for ſhowing his blood to be of infinite value, as ing the blood of God, ſo as we may have boldneſs, in all ur approaches to the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.

3. It is neceſſary for ſtrengthening our faith in all his di- ne properties, promiſes, and former works. In the view of is immutable name, *The ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever;* e may ſay, as Pſal. xc. 1. "Thou, Lord, haſt been our welling-place in all generations;" why? "From everlaſting hou art God." We may, in the view of this, aſſure our- lves that all the promiſes are in him Yea, and in him Amen the glory of God, becauſe he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, nd for ever. We may hence learn contentment, ſince he hath id, "I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee." So that e may boldly ſay, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not ar what man ſhall do unto me," Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

4. It is neceſſary for inſtructing us in the ſpecial uſe of God's rmer dealings with men, namely, in the like good ways of e Lord, to expect the like bleſſings; and in the like evil ways, expect the like judgments, becauſe the Lord is the ſame yeſ- rday, to-day, and for ever. He is ever of the ſame mind. Vhat in former times was right in his eyes, and exceptable him, is ſtill ſo. Thus, Rom. iv. 23, 24. "Now, it was ot written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; t for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe in m who raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead." What rmerly offended him and provoked his wrath, doth ſo ſtill, 1 or. x. 15,—12.

5. It is neceſſary for aſſuring us of his continual and perpetual care of his church, Mat. xxviii. 20. He hath ſaid, "Lo I am with you always to the end of the world;" and he will make it good; for, he is the ſame yeſterday to-day and for ever. It may aſſure us alſo of the church's continuance: his church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, Matth. xvi. 18. There is no enchantment againſt Jacob, nor divination againſt Iſrael.

6. It is neceſſary for encouraging us at all times againſt all attempts of enemies, preſent and to come. Why, God hath ſaid of him, "Sit thou at my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footſtool, Pſal. cx. 1. He will break them with a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel, Pſal. ii. 9. In vain do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. In vain do they ſet themſelves and take counſel together againſt the Lord and his Anointed," &c. Enemies preſent, and enemies to come, ſhall be daſhed in due time; for he is ſtill preſent, and ſtill to come, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.

2*dly*, I would ſhew the neceſſity of knowing and believing this, eſpecially in ſhaking times, wherein diverſe and ſtrange doctrines appear. Why the need of taking a view of Chriſt, as the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, in ſuch a time, may be evident in the following reſpects:

1. By viewing that Chriſt is immutably the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. In times of error and deluſion we come to ſee the difference between truth and error, truth and deceit; for, whenever Chriſt is diſcerned in this name, we are brought to underſtand ſound and ſaving doctrine, from that which is unſound, new, and ſtrange; in regard, as *Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever*, ſo truth is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. It is one entire ſyſtem, and cannot be divided, one part of it from another, at any time; whereas diverſe doctrines, ſpoken of verſe 9. may be known by their diverſity or dividing of one piece of truth from another, to be unſound, unſafe, and unlike to Chriſt, who is always the ſame. In time of error and deluſion, then, a view of Chriſt, as immutably the ſame, is needful for making the truth evident, as a quite different thing from that which is new, ſtrange, and uncouth.

2. A view of Chriſt, as immutably the ſame, is needful at ſuch ſeaſons, for eſtabliſhing in the faith of the truth, and continuing in the faith, grounded and ſettled, and not being moved away from the hope of the goſpel, Col. i. 2, 3. by whatever ſhaking wind: for a view of Chriſt, as the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, and of his truth, as ſtill the ſame as ever it was, this natively moves the believing ſoul to have the ſame love to truth as ever, the ſame eſteem of the truth as

, the same delight in the truth as ever, and the same zeal concern for the truth as ever; because Christ, and his th, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

3. A view of Christ, as immutably the same is needful, in h a time, for correcting our inconstancy, our levity in de- ing from the truth, and not cleaving to it, but being easi- seduced and drawn aside, like those whom the Apostle calls ildren tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the ght of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait deceive, Eph. iv. 14. A view of Christ, and his truth, as mutably the same, tends to correct this; for this levity then pears to be an affronting of the truth of Christ, as if it were t the same; an affronting of Christ, as if he were not the e Christ that he was; and an affronting of ourselves as ngeable creatures, unlike to him, who is invariably the me.

4. The view of Christ, and his truth, as immutably the me, is needful, in such a season, for shewing the falshood d damnable tendency of new and strange doctrine; for if od, and Christ, and truth, be still the same, then a new and range God, is a false God; a new and strange Christ, is a false hrist; a new and strange doctrine, is a false doctrine. A od that we had not yesterday, is a false God; a Christ that e had not yesterday is a false Christ. *Christ is the same yester- y, to-day and for ever;* therefore a Christ that was not yester- y, as well as to-day, is a false Christ. A doctrine that was not to be found in our Bible, nor taught us in the word formerly, a false doctrine. Hence the apostle exhorts, Col. ii. 7. "To be ooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith, as we ve been taught." The damnable nature of such doctrine you ay see, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. "But there were false prophets also mong the people, even as there shall be false teachers among ou, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift de- truction: and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by eason of whom, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." There is no false doctrine broached, nor delusive spirit appear- g, but, according to that prophecy, it will find many favour- rs, followers, and entertainers thereof. This made Paul to y, when he saw the levity and inconstancy of people, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him, that hath cal- ed you, to another gospel. O foolish Galatians, who hath be- witched you, &c. Having begun in the Spirit, are you made perfect in the flesh?" There is in seducers, a bewitching di- abolical spirit, that makes them restless in leading others into destruction with them: so the Scribes and Pharisees compassed sea and land to make proselytes: they were blind leaders of

the blind: though they were blind, yet they would be leaders. Now, a view of Christ, and his truth, as immutably the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, is needful, for shewing the damnable nature of these new and strange doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, directly opposite to the true Christ, who is the only Saviour and Deliverer; whereas every new and false Christ is a seducer and destroyer of immortal souls.

5. The view of the immutability of Christ, and his truth, as one and the same always, shews that diverse doctrines must be delusive, though men are apt to be carried about therewith: for, whereas the doctrine of truth is one and clear, and firm and stable, the doctrines of men and devils are not one, but divers, various, ambiguous, deceitful, inconstant, and unstable, and even inconsistent with one another. Man being full of vain inventions, there is no certain rule to be found but in God's word; hence we are called to try the spirits, whether they be of God; and for this end we need to pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, without which we may be soon drawn into one or other of these diverse doctrines.

6. The view of the immutability of Christ, and his truth, is needful for shewing, that new and strange doctrine must be delusive. Things are called strange that are not usual, or that have not been heard of before; but in the God, and among God's people, that is called strange which is not grounded on God's word; for the word of God is that upon which the church of God grounds all her doctrine, and acknowledges none for sound, but that which is contained therein, founded thereon, and raised therefrom. Thus the fire, that Nadab and Abihu offered before the Lord, is called strange fire, because it had no warrant from God's word. Thus the doctrines the apostle here warns the Hebrews against, under the name of strange doctrine, are such as have no warrant from the word of God, and which the church of God had neither acknowledged nor received.

Now, the immutability of the truth being known, makes it evident, how all diverse and strange doctrines, doth impeach some divine truth or other; how the broachers of them ruin immortal souls, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; for Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is here set in opposition to diverse and strange doctrines, intimating, that men cannot be saved in any religion, as some dream; for if Christ and his unchangeable truth be rejected, and diverse and strange doctines be embraced, damnation, instead of salvation, will be the end, however right they may reckon their new way. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man; but the ends thereof are the ways of death," Prov. xiv. 12.

IV. The fourth thing propoſed, was the application. Is Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever? Hence ſee,

1. The great diſconformity between CHRIST and us; he is ſtill the ſame, but we are ſtill changing and varying. We ſee, Hoſ. vi. 4. how God complains of us, "O Ephraim, what ſhall I do unto thee? O Judah, what ſhall I do unto thee? For your goodneſs is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away." But what is the way to be fixed in the faith, and fixed in the love of Chriſt? Even to know and believe how fixed and firm, and immutable he is. The ground of faith is unchangeable; but the riſe and ſpring of our unbelieving doubts, and jealouſies, and waverings, is our apprehending upon every turn of the wheel of Providence, as if Chriſt were another thing than he was; as if he were changed in his love, as we are in our outward frame, and he in his outward diſpenſations.

2. Hence ſee the root of error in principle, about Chriſt in his kingdom and government. As the Sadducees erred about the reſurrection, not knowing the power of God; ſo many in our day err about the kingdom and government of Chriſt in Zion, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the immutability of Chriſt, that his throne is for ever and ever, and that his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, Dan. iv. 34. But men are apt to think him changeable like themſelves, and ſo think his government in Zion is arbitrary and ambulatory. Hence Chriſt, as a King, is treated with contempt and mockery. Men put a crown of thorns ſtill yet upon his head, inſtead of a crown of glory and honour; a reed into his hand, inſtead of a ſceptre.

3. Hence ſee the excellency and extent of the object of faith. The true Chriſt is ſo glorious and excellent, that he cannot be ſeen but by that faith which is of divine operation. They that ſee the true Chriſt, (and O Sirs, try your faith by this) they ſee one who is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. Oh! what deluſive ſights of Chriſt do many now ſee! They ſee a beautiful and glorious perſon preſented to their imagination, or to their bodily eye. What a devil, inſtead of Chriſt, is this! But true faith is the evidence of things not ſeen, and the ſubſtance of things hoped for. The faith that ſees Chriſt truly, ſees both what is paſt, and preſent and to come; a Chriſt yeſterday, to-day and for ever.

4. Hence ſee the picture of a falſe Chriſt. Every new Chriſt, that was not ſeen in the Bible yeſterday, is a falſe Chriſt. New and ſtrange ſorts of convictions are to be ſuſpected. If, inſtead of convictions, we hear of convulſions, bitter outcryings, frights, faintings, and foamings, how deluſive is the work! New and ſtrange converſions are to be ſuſpected. If, inſtead of conver-

ſions, we hear of ſudden conſolations by voices, viſions, revelations, impulſes and impreſſions, what deluſive work is this! If they are not Bible-convictions, Bible-converſions, and ſuch as the ſaints of God, of old and of late, have experienced according to the ſcriptures, then they bear the image of a falſe Chriſt; for the true Chriſt is *the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever.* His word is an immutable rule whereby to try the ſpirits; therefore, "To the law and to the teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this, it is becauſe there is no light in them." His word is the ſame that it was, his Spirit is the ſame, and his work, upon all that are effectually called, is ſtill the ſame ſubſtantially, becauſe he is the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever. Therefore, work of a different kind ſhews forth but a falſe Chriſt.

5. Hence ſee, if it be ſo needful to know and believe this immutability of Chriſt, eſpecially in ſhaking times, when faith is endangered by new and falſe doctrine, what need there is, at this very day, to be eſtabliſhed in the faith of this truth, That Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever. At this day the faith of many is endangered, and diverſe and ſtrange doctrines are appearing on the field. Many errors have been broached in our day, ſuch as thoſe of Arians, Deiſts, Arminians, Socinians, Pelagians, &c. But never, I think, did Satan appear as an angel of light, ſo evidently, as in a deluſive ſpirit that is now ſpreading through the land. But whatever glorious ſhew and appearance of religion it makes, if it can be proved, that the language and tendency of it is, "Let us go after other God's." Deut. xiii. 2.; if it lead people to diverſe and ſtrange doctrines, and to a new and ſtrange God, a new and ſtrange Chriſt, that ye never heard of in the Bible, then the deluſion and diabolical tendency of it may appear; ſo as all ought to beware of being carried about with ſuch ſtrange doctrines, that ſtand ſo directly oppoſite to him who is *the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever.* Here, according to the view I have of that matter, I ſhall ſhew you in eight or ten particulars, what another God, and what another Chriſt is appearing in the deluſive ſpirit of this time, (brought in by the inſtrumentality of the foreigner*, of whom we had once ſome grounds for very favourable thoughts and expectations, till we underſtood him more fully, and found him in ſeveral reſpects, a ſtranger to our God, and ſetting up another God.) Why?

(1.) Our God is, according to Pſalm cxxvi. 3. a God that hath done great things for us, and particularly by calling us to and working for us, a glorious work of reformation; bringing

* The perſon intended here can be no other than Mr. Whitfield, who was the principal promoter of this ſtrange work.

us out of antichristian Babylon, and helping us to make a happy secession from the Church of Rome; for the defence of which glorious reformation, we now own our secession from such as are razing it. But the delusive spirit of the times leads people to another God, a new God, that is calling us off from this reformation-work, and all contending or witnessing for it, and would have it tumbled down as a Babel-building.

(2.) Our God is a God that invested Christ with the government of the Church, that hath put the government upon his shoulders, and anointed him King in Zion, Psalm ii. 6.; and made him head of the body, the Church visible on earth, as well as invisible. But the new God, that now appears, is a God that robs Christ of his government in the visible church, and seeks to destroy the ancient order and disciple thereof. But, with relation to this,

(3.) Our God is a God that planted a hedge about his vineyard, Isa. v. 2. and fenced it with a hedge of government, and walls of discipline. But the new God, that appears in the strange doctrine that is a-spreading, is for pulling down the hedge. The present delusive spirit is the instrument of God's wrath against a barren apostate church, by which God is saying, as in verse 5. "And now, go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedges thereof and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the walls thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste, &c." God says this wrathfully, in his indignation; but the delusive spirit says it doctrinally, and by way of approbation, making the sin of such as pull down these hedges, to be but a small matter, and what the Lord's people have little reason to be concerned about, being none of their sins, or among the least of them, as some express it. Whereas, every deeply awakened and humbled soul will see and suspect itself to be the Achan that troubles the camp and provokes God to leave ministers and judicatories to spoil his vineyard.

(4.) Our God is a God that calls us, Song ii. 51. to "Take the foxes, (the great ones, and even) the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." To take and try those that say they are apostles, and are not, and to find them liars, Rev. ii. 2.; to refute and reject them: a God that says, "A heritic, after the first and second admonition, reject." But the new and different God, that the strange doctrine of the times brings in, is a God that cries up a boundless toleration of all sects, and a liberty of conscience to, and communion with all sorts of heretics, especially if they have but the denomination of Christians.

(5.) Our God is a God that hates covenant-breaking and

perjury; and who after he hath published to us his covenant of grace and mercy warrants us to show our gratitude unto him by a covenant of duty and service, whether personal or natural. If a person vow his service to the Lord, as David did, saying I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. God hates his breaking of that vow, saying, "If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." If a church or nation vow and swear that they will serve the Lord and cleave unto him, as Israel did, Deut. xxix. 12, 24, 25. God hates apostacy from such a solemn profession, and threatens a sword to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. But it is a new and a strange God that seeks to have the most solemn covenants broken, and thinks nothing of involving the land in national perjury; but if our God be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, he is the same God that he was this time hundred years, when he signified his acceptance in our covenanting-days, by a remarkable out-pouring of his Spirit, and the same Spirit will not seal contraries.

(6.) Our Lord who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, leads his people that are converted, to an espousing of, and an establishment in the present truth, 2 Pet. i. 12.; and to the keeping the word of his patience, and the testimony o the time; and to an opposition to the defections and corruptions of the times: see Rev. ii. 10. 2 John ver. 8. 10, 11. But we hear the new and strange way, that the delusive spirit of the times leads the converts unto, is even the greatest aversion from, and opposition to the testimony of the time: and to that which hath been the word of Christ's patience, given to us in this land since our reforming days. A vile reproach is indeed cast upon us, as if we would allow none to be true converts, but those that follow us; nor nothing to be the work of God, but what is wrought amongst us; nor none to be true Christians but such as join in with (what they call) our Testimony. Meantime, I know no Testimony we have, but what is for and in favours of that work of Reformation, which the Lord's people in Scotland have this hundred years been calling the work of God, and if this present work, which is called also the work of God, be standing in opposion to that work of God, then surely we may say, that old work and this new work cannot both be the work of God.

(7.) Our God and Christ, that we have been acquainted with by the word, leads us to discountenance those ministers who run without being sent, and that are evidently erroneous; he calls us to beware of their leaven; and to cease from hearing them, Prov. xix. 27.; and to mark them that bear down the work of God, and carry on the defections of the day, and walk disorderly. But the false Spirit of the day leads people

to favour and own them as much, if not more, than even those that are contending for the faith.

(8.) The true Christ is a Christ whose voice was not heard in the streets in a noisy manner, and whose kingdom comes not with observation, outward show, or ostentation. But the new Christ, now upon the field, is with such a noise, that all the supposed convictions and conversions are instantly known and noised abroad, as if some outward motion were among the true marks of inward conviction; and as if heart conversion to God were become as visible and evident to men, in a moment, as different postures and gestures of the body are to the eyes of men. Alas! what delusions are these, if this be the case!

(9.) The true Christ is he that comes in the still, calm voice of the gospel, which alone is the power of God to salvation and conversion, while therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith, Rom. i. 16, 17. But the new Christ, the false Christ of our day, appears as it were, in a whirlwind driving poor people out of their wits and senses, beating down their bodies with pains and convulsions, distempers, and distractions, and then sounding into their ear some sudden comfort; for he that, as an angel of darkness, frighted and terrified them, can as soon, as an angel of light, flatter and befool them, even with false-applied scriptures, to chear up their spirits, and cherish their delusive assurance that all is well.

(10.) The true God is a God of order. The true Spirit of Christ is an orderly Spirit, teaching us by his sent servants, and saying, "How can they preach except they be sent?" Rom. x. 15. But the new God, the new Christ, the new Spirit that is spreading, stirs up private persons, yea, even young boys, to preach, exhort, and expound scripture publicly, and so to prostitute the sacred office of the ministry; and so far as the devil gets leave, would make void and unnecessary that regular call and ministerial mission that God hath appointed in his word, declaring that no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron, Heb. v. 4.

Other particulars might be added, but these are sufficient to show, that the delusive spirit, that is now-a-days going abroad, and spreading through the whole land, is leading people to another God, another Christ, than we or our fathers worshipped, and not the same God and the same Christ that we and they learned from the scriptures to worship and serve. The temptations of the day, lead men, they say, to Christ; but it is to another Christ, or else (which is blasphemy to suppose) to think that Christ was another thing than he was, another person, another Saviour, another sort of a Lord and King than he was of old. But the best antidote against such false Christs,

and ſtrange doctrines, is the faith of our text, *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* People have need therefore to continue in the faith they have been taught, Col. ii. 7. and to remember the advice Paul gives to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 12, 13, 14. "But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived: but continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned, and haſt been aſſured of, and knowing of whom thou haſt learned them." And the advice given, 2 John ver. 8. "Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things that we have wrought;" or, as it may be read, "which ye have gained."

6. Hence ſee, in the ſixth place, how valuable the truth ought to be unto us, ſince the view of Chriſt, as the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, is given us as an antidote againſt all error, and againſt being carried about with diverſe and ſtrange doctrines. When we are like children, running here and there, toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and carried about therewith, we forget that Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to-day and for ever. We ought to be eſtabliſhed in the faith of the truth, in the faith of all ſcripture-truth, becauſe "The word of the Lord endures for ever." But, more particularly,

(1.) In the faith of the preſent truth. The preſent truth in the apoſtle's time, was the truth of Chriſt's being come in the fleſh: for that was the truth then moſt controverted; and if a man brought not that truth along with him, he was reckoned a deceiver and Antichriſt, even tho' he ſhould have preached never ſo many excellent truths, that were not then controverted, 2 John vii. 10. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh; this is a deceiver and an antichriſt. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſe, neither bid him, God ſpeed." The preſent truth, in our time, is the truth that is controverted and oppoſed in our time: if a man be not faithful to that, he will never be faithful in his generation; yea, if a man come and preach never ſo many excellent truths, that are not controverted, he is but a deceiver and an antichriſt, if he bring not the preſent truth, that the devil and the world are contradicting and oppoſing: but if, inſtead of bringing the preſent truth, ſuch as that of Chriſt's headſhip and government in Zion, he ſhall bring the very oppoſite, and be a contradictor and oppoſer of the preſent truth, then we are to look upon him as an antichriſt and a deceiver with a witneſs.

(2.) We ought to be eſtabliſhed in the faith of the leaſt truth, if any thing can be called little truth; the ſmalleſt we

can think of is an invaluable treasure. Little truths are like the little pinnings of a wall, they are as necessary as the great stones; for take away the little pinnings, and you loose and dissolve the whole building. There is a close connection between every truth; they are linked and chained together; and you cannot loose one link, but you break the whole chain. They who are not zealously concerned for the least truth, will have no zeal for any truth at all; if they be unfaithful in a little, they will be unfaithful in much.

7. If Christ and his truth, be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; then see how highly reprovable they are, that are not the same men they were, with reference to all the present truths of the times. Some that have made as splendid a profession of cleaving to all the reformation principles of this church, that we in this land are solemnly sworn to maintain, they are not now of the same mind; they have not the same sentiments, the same profession, the same favour to the truth, that they had. Why, what can be the reason? It may be said, That either they have gone out from us, because they were not of us, 1 John ii. 19. or, they have forgotten that *Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* The devil hath put another Bible in their hand, and so another Christ in their head. But let old truths, Sirs, be highly valued, and not thrown aside for new appearances: for, the good old way is the new and living way; and the old and new way is the everlasting way. What was truth formerly, is truth presently, and will be truth perpetually; for, *Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* But let none be stumbled at the truth, though they should see tall cedars falling into error; for, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter days, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," 1 Tim. iv. 1. Therefore be not soon shaken in your minds, by whatever spirit, word, or letter.

8. If Christ be still the same, then the followers of Christ should study a sameness among themselves, such as is recommended and enjoined, 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 2.—iv. 2. There ought to be an identity and sameness amongst all the friends of that Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Why, all true believers have the same spiritual meat and drink; for, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. They have all the same Spirit, and the same anointing that teaches all things. There are diversities of gifts, and degrees of graces, but the same Spirit, and they are said to

have all the same Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13.; and should, as members of Christ, have the same care one of another.

9. If Christ be the same to-day as well as yesterday, the same presently as he was formerly; then let him be your present choice, your present portion, your present help in trouble, your present resting-place; and see your present duty towards him, to glorify him on earth, by witnessing for him, and confessing him before the world. Why hath he had witnesses for his name in all ages, and some at this day, and will have some in generations to come? Because he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. O Sirs, study you to be standing witnesses for this immutable Jesus.

10. If he be the same for ever, as well as yesterday and to-day; then see ground for faith and hope for the future. O what ground of comfort is here to believers, against all future changes, that Christ is unchangeably the same. You may not only look back, believer, and reflect upon such and such a Bethel-visit he made you: whatever changes have befallen you since that time, yet you may be sure he is the God of Bethel: he is the same at your worst, that you found him at your best; but you may look forward, and be sure that he will be the same for ever. And as there is no alteration in Christ's heart or disposition in heaven, from what he had upon earth; Eph. iv. 10. "He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," so his mind will be for ever the same. Fear not future events, whatever is to come. His name is, "Which was, and is, and is to come." Is death to come? so is Christ. Is judgment to come? so is Christ. Is eternity to come? so is Christ. Happy to all eternity is the believer in Christ; for, he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The promises of the covenant stand fast in him, who is always the same. It was made in him before the world, and will be established for ever.

11. See matter of dread and terror to all the despisers of Christ, and his cause and truth. He that is the same for ever in his promise to believers, is the same for ever in his threatening to unbelievers. He that is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, hath said, "He that believeth not shall be damned. Behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish." The same Jesus that died at Jerusalem, and is published in this gospel, is to come again to judgment: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up unto heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven," Acts i. 11. His immutable word of truth hath certified your everlasting ruin. The irrevocable sentence

will pass against you, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And the wrath of the eternal God, and the immutable Jesus, will not be for a day, but wrath, like himself, the same for ever.

12. Hence see an evidence of true and saving faith. It is a faith of the same sort with the faith of the redeemed in former ages; the same with the faith of those that are away to glory, "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation," say the words immediately preceeding our text. It is a faith that follows the footsteps of the flock; a faith that looks to Jesus as still the same, and finds him invariably the same, whenever it renews its acting upon him; though sometimes he may shut the door upon you, for your trial and chastisement, or humiliation; yet, whenever he opens the door, and lets you in to him, you find him always the same Jesus; and that his word is the same, his love the same, his covenant the same, his promises the same, his blood the same, in its virtue and efficacy; his righteousness ay the same for your acceptance; his fulness constantly the same for your supply; his sweetness perpetually the same to endear your heart to him; his brightness always the same to display the glory of God. And here is the relief that faith gives amidst all fears and faintings, "He is God and changes not, therefore you are not consumed." He is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* —Is this the faith you have? Indeed the more you live by faith upon his immutability, the more immutable and immoveable will you be: "They that trust in the Lord shall be like mount Zion, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." It is a firm faith that stands here.

In a word, here is a foundation for the faith and hope of all the sinners who hear this gospel, and would be saved from the wrath of him that lives for ever and ever; and would wish to be blessed and happy in him for ever. O come to him before you go away from this place. He is the best match, for time and eternity, that ever you heard tell of; and every word in the text is an argument and encouragement to come to him.

1. He is a Jesus, a Saviour, to save you from your sins, and from the wrath to come he is able to save you. And this name Jesus imports an answer to all objections you can make by unbelief, your sinfulness, guiltiness, deadness, stupidness, or be what it will that troubles you; if you would be saved from all these evils, a Jesus is offered to you. O Sirs, will you have him!

2. Consider he is Christ, anointed of God to save, having

his Father's commission; he comes in his Father's name and authority: "Him hath God the Father sealed."

3. He is Jesus Christ the same; he is immutable and unchangeable. Many changes pass over you, and many sinful changes always to the worse; and the last change, by death, is at hand. Would you be secured in an unchangeable Saviour, fixed upon a rock that is immutable? O Sirs, here it is!

4. He is the same yesterday, the same from eternity, being set up from everlasting: the same from the beginning of time: the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: the same Jesus that was promised immediately after the fall; the same Jesus that, in the fulness of time, assumed our nature, and was made of a woman, made under the law; the same Jesus Christ that died at Jerusalem, and rose again, and ascended to heaven; the same Jesus that was the object of the faith of all the Old or New Testament saints that are now in glory, and have believed in him to everlasting life; and therefore the fit object of your faith.

5. He is not only the same yesterday, but the same to-day; and therefore, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." His days are endless, but you have no day but this to reckon upon; yea, not an hour but this, that you know of; nay, not a moment, not a now, but this present now; "Now is the accepted time." Yesterday is gone for ever from you, and this day is going: "Ye know not what a day may bring forth." But since he is the same as he was yesterday, and you will not be the same to-morrow that you are to-day; you will neither be in the same place, nor in the same case, nor have the same offer; it may be, therefore, now or never must you close with him.

6. Consider he is the same for ever; and therefore, if you receive him to-day, you shall enjoy him for ever. You shall find him an everlasting Father, and an unalterable friend. He will be the same to you that he hath been, and will be to all that ever come to him. He will be your everlasting righteousness, everlasting strength, everlasting light, everlasting life, and everlasting all. Neither death, judgment, nor eternity, will make a change upon him. No change in your lot or frame afterwards shall ever make him alter his mind, or his love towards you. You will be happy for ever, because he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*—May the Lord draw you to him.

EXTRACTS

From Sermon cxxii. and cxxiv. Vol. 7th, of Ralph Erskine's Works.*

FROM SERMON CXXII.

PAGE 375, &c.

Luke xxii. 31, 32. *And the Lord ſaid, &c.*

Obſ. 4. "SATAN's temptations are very ſubtile and deluſive." His ſieve may be very narrow. His ſifting and winnowing time is a time of great and ſtrong deluſion. Here I would offer ſome remarks concerning Satan's deluſions.

Remark 1. "That there are two extremes to be much avoided, namely, the calling the work of the Spirit of God a deluſion, and the calling the deluſions of Satan the work of God's Spirit." To call the work of God's Spirit a deluſion, and to do it knowingly, is a doing deſpite to the Spirit of God: and again, to call the deluſions of Satan the work of God's Spirit, is an aſcribing too much to the devil; giving him the place of God.

Remark 2. "That the devil is God's ape." Chriſt was evidently demonſtrated to be the true Meſſiah: yet he ſaid there ſhould be falſe Chriſt's; "Take heed that no man deceive you: For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt,

* In the Extracts here given, our author has an eye principally "upon what was called, *The extraordinary work at Cambuſlang*, which commenced Feb. 18th 1742; and afterwards diffuſed itſelf thro' ſeveral parts of the kingdom, much promoted by Whitfield's miniſtrations, and peruſing his journals; and approved by many, both miniſters and people, and atteſted by not a few as a *genuine work, and remarkable down pouring of the Spirit of God*, though alledged by others, to be a *deluſion of Satan*; in regard it was diveſted of the poſitive and permanent evidences of a real work of converſion, held forth by the Spirit of God in the ſcriptures: the ſubjects of it being ſtrangely agitated by ſtrong convulſions, fearful contortions, loud out-crying, imaginary ſights, viſionary repreſentations, great ſwoonings, foamings, faintings, &c.; which led them off from the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, without them in the word, to build upon ſomething wrought in them as the ground of their hope; filled them with a vain apprehenſion that the Spirit was poured down in a remarkable manner upon the churches, though going on in a deep courſe of defection and apoſtaſy, breeding in them lax principles of religion, and an indifferency with reſpect to all profeſſions; filling them with bitterneſs of ſpirit againſt all who did not approve of the work, though never ſo eminent in piety and holineſs.—The event indeed greatly confirmed the allegation; many of the moſt eminent ſubjects of this work, turned out to be very naughty perſons: and the work itſelf ſoon intirely vaniſhed."

and shall deceive many. There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," Matth. xxiv. 4, 5, 24. There are deep things of God, and also the depths of Satan, that we read of, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Rev. ii. 24.

Remark 3. "That the delusions of Satan are as large as the operations of the Spirit of God." The devil hath his false apostles, his false comforters, his false light, his false assurance. He is said to fill Ananias's heart; *i. e.* made his heart audacious and bold, as some explain it. He hath also his false prophecies and fortelling events. The devil told Saul what should befal him. He may know some things to come, by revelation from God, for the punishment of those that shall be seduced. Amongst the Anabaptists in Munster, when a law was made for all to bring their goods to the common stock, the maids cou'd tell, as Peter did of Ananias, how much every man had hid at home of his goods. See Deut. xiii. 1, 2. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them: thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet," &c.

Remark 4. "That Satan accommodates his temptations to the times." The time of the Reformation was a time of the deep delusions of Satan prevailing. The Reformers were reviled, as men concerned about the letter, not the spirit of the gospel, by these that pretended to extraordinary revelations.

Hence, they had bitter conflicts, not only with Papists, but with men that pretended to be more enlightened than the Reformers were, and to have high teachings of the Spirit of God, even above the scriptures. These that did adhere to the scripture, and would try the spirits and revelations by it, were called, *Literistas et Vocalistas*, "Literists and Vocalists;" men acquainted only with the words and vowels of the scripture, having nothing of the Spirit of God. Luther was inveighed against as having published nothing but *carnale evangelicum*, a *carnal gospel*. Wherever Reformation-light broke out, there these tares came up, whereby great divisions were raised, and the Reformation was made abominable and odious to the world. Such seem to be the attempts of Satan at this day, when the standard of a testimony is lifted up for a covenanted Reformation. The power and policy of hell is at work to bring any such endeavour after Reformation under contempt; which, we are forewarned, Satan may get leave

to do, by ſtrong deluſions and lying wonders, as in the forecited Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Where a falſe prophet is ſaid to give a ſign or a wonder, and the ſign or wonder is ſuppoſed to come to paſs. But obſerve there,

1. The devil's deſign, verſe 2, namely, to ſeduce, ſaying, "Let us go after other gods, which thou haſt not known, and let us ſerve them." Thus the preſent temptations ſeem to be, let us go to ſome other god, or ſome other way of worſhipping God, or ſome other form of church-government and diſcipline, than what we have known and ſworn to be founded upon God's word; let us, after vows, make inquiry, and inquire after ſome new god, new worſhip, new government of the church. Why, here is a new prophet riſen, giving ſigns and wonders that come to paſs. Here is Satan's deſign. But,

2. Obſerve why God permits this. Why, as it may be for hardening a backſliding generation, in his righteous judgment; ſo for trying his people, verſe 3, 4. "The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your ſoul;" whether you will cleave to him and his truth, even when truth is perſecuted, reproached, and brought into diſcredit by Satan's deluſions. O then, Sirs, with what holineſs, humility, and circumſpection ought the children of God to walk in ſuch times of temptations and deluſion, "That they be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, by ſpirit, or by word, or by letter," as you have the expreſſion! 2 Theſ. ii. 2. We are told, that, "In the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits," 1 Tim. iv. 1.

Remark 5. "That the ordinary effects of deluſion are violence and confidence."—Violent motions are ordinarily from an evil ſpirit, hurrying the ſoul beyond all due bounds and limits, effecting very ſudden alterations and ſtrong paſſions; whereas, the Spirit of God is more ſedate and compoſed. It is true, the power and efficacy of the Spirit of God is ſometimes demonſtrated by the appearing of fiery cloven tongues, and by a mighty ruſhing wind; but, at another time, appearing in the form of a dove; demonſtrating, that it is ſuch a fire and power, as is conſiſtent with the other graces of meekneſs and humility, and with holy fear and trembling.—Confidence is alſo an ordinary effect of deluſion, ſelf-confidence, and oſtentation. The Holy Ghoſt deſcended in the ſhape of a dove, to ſhew how meek and humble the operations of the Spirit are in theſe in whom he dwells. The deluded are uſually confident, becauſe the deluſions are ſtrong; becauſe they come by way of judgment, for abuſing former light, and not receiving the truth in

the love of it. These four hundred false prophets, in Ahab's time, are thought, by the learned, to have been true prophets at first, and such as were of the company and college of the other prophets; but, abusing that gift to the pleasing of men, to the seeking of themselves, and siding and complying with the times, they were justly delivered up of God to such a false way; and they were hardened like Pharoah; hardened of God in their deceitful way, as you see in Zedekiah's impudence, 1 Kings xxii. 24. when he struck Micaiah on the cheek, saying, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?" Spiritual judgments make men secure, and full of self-flattery, and confirm them more to believe a lie.

Remark 5. "That as the spirits are to be tried by the scripture; so there are signs and marks, whereby delusions of Satan may be known, and distinguished from the saving operations of the Spirit."

Quest. When are impressions and impulses evidently delusive?

Ans. Beside what is said already, we offer you the following six particulars, for a solution of this matter.

1. When the impression carries a man out of his sphere, and turns private persons to be public preachers, without being called of God, as was Aaron, Heb. v. 4. in a regular way to the sacred office: and when one is persuaded to that which is good, but without a commission or warrant. Uzziah's holding up the ark was good, but he had no commission; and therefore was slain;

2. When public devotion is brought in and practised, to the prejudice of our particular callings. God calls men to be diligent in business, as well as fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11. But when one duty excludes another, from time to time, it is delusive work.

3. When people are persuaded to duty unseasonably and unmeasurably. The righteous bringing forth his fruit in his season, Psal. i. 3. God hath made every thing beautiful in his season. The God of order, by his Spirit, puts not a man upon irregular duties.—The duty is not from the Spirit of God that is unmeasurable, no more than that which is quite unseasonable. As duty misplaced differs little from sin, if it be not just turned into sin; so a man is persuaded to duty unmeasurably when he is tempted to such a multitude of duties as to weary out his spirits, and exhaust them, to the ruin even of the body. But he that came to save souls, came not to destroy bodies.

4. When any truth is advanced, in order to make way for error, for one truth to the prejudice of another. Devils may confess Christ and his truths, to serve a turn, Mark i. 24.

Acts xvi. 17. It may be to divide Christ in his offices, and to disparage some other truths. He may allow false prophets to teach some things Christ has commanded, provided men be not taught to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded, as in Matth. xxviii. 20. The devil may possibly extol Christ, as a Prophet, in his doctrine, that he may dethrone him as a King in his government: for, he cannot endure that Christ should reign. He may suffer the flowers of gospel doctrine to be spread, upon condition he can get the hedge of discipline and government, that should be about God's garden of flowers, overthrown; with a design, that the flowers themselves may be trampled on, and ruined in the issue.

5. That which hath no will and inclination to tried is delusive. Truth seeks the light, and is willing to be searched: "Every one that doth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved: but he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God," John iii. 20, 21.

6. That which hath a native tendency to promote sin and security is delusion. If it tend to encourage sin and corruption, whether personal or public corruption; and tend to discourage reformation, personal or public reformation, then it is evidently delusion: for unholiness cannot be from the Holy Spirit. Thus, these that endeavoured to discourage Nehemiah in building the wall of Jerusalem, shewed thereby what a delusive spirit they were of; "My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear," Neh. vi. 14. That cannot be of God which opposes the work of God, and of reformation.—Again, if it tend to lead to security, it is a delusion; "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17. Now, they think they are rich, they want nothing; but the Spirit of God thinks otherwise, and tells them they want all things.

Remark 7. "That God may justly let loose a spirit of error and delusion." This he may do,

1. To punish the sin of a visible church in not receiving the truth; 2 Thes. ii. 11. And for this cause, (namely, because they received not the love of the truth, ver. 10.) God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."—Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own heart's lusts, and they walked in their own coun-

ſels." I ſhall not ſay how far God may puniſh a church that is corrupt, and will have none of God's counſel, by leaving them to their own counſels; and, when they reject a teſtimony for God, by allowing them to receive a lying teſtimony, and to believe a lie.

2. To glorify himſelf, and wipe off the reproach of his people, by diſcovering them; for, "There muſt be hereſies, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt," 1 Cor. ii. 19.; that they may appear to be men of conſcience.

3. That the truth may be cleared by oppoſition. The oppoſition that the Sadducees made to the doctrine of the reſurrection, made Chriſt clear it from ſome Old Teſtament ſcriptures, wherein we would never otherwiſe have known to have ſought it.

4. To purge out practical errors in his own people. When we have low thoughts of the Scripture, then he lets looſe Deiſts, that we may conceive the higher value for the word. When low thoughts of the Son of God, then he lets looſe Arians to deny his divinity, that we may begin to conceive more highly of Chriſt. When we have low thoughts and wrong conceptions of the Spirit, in his operations, then he lets looſe a deluſive ſpirit, that we may prize and value the gracious and ſaving operations of the Spirit the more.

Remark 8. "That ſpecial direction is neceſſary in time of error and deluſion, and in a ſifting and winnowing time. For clearing this, I here offer theſe four things:

1. Take not truth upon truſt or report, but drink it from the fountain of holy writ; otherwiſe we will err not knowing the ſcriptures.

2. Labour to find the truth, in the good thereof, from your experience; "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou haſt quickened me," Pſal. cxix. 93. You may as well ſhape a coat for the moon, as fix a man in divine truth, that knows nothing of the ſweetneſs and ſavoury reliſh of divine truth. This and that, and the other perſuaſion, is all alike to them.

3. Fortify yourſelves againſt a time of trial; "Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that you ſhould not be offended; they ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues; yea, the time cometh that whoſoever killeth you will think that he doth God ſervice," John xvi. 1, 2.

4. Take heed of that light which cometh in an hour of temptation; for, though it may be right yet it needs to be well tried; becauſe, at ſuch a time, Satan is buſy to come in with wild fire, that miſleads the traveller. Hence ſpecial keeping is neceſſary in the hour of temptation, Rev. iii. 10.

for then we are apt to favour that light that leads to shun the cross, and to side with the times.

When Satan's sieve is very small, people need a very strong faith. If there be a picture of conversion drawn by the devil as an angel of light, how hard may it be to perceive the depths of Satan? Think not strange, though Satan should counterfeit conversion; for, I know none of the graces of God's Spirit but he may pretend to work. And we are sure he can cite scripture as he did to Christ himself, Matth. iv. 3,—11.

Quer. How shall I know a scripture given by Christ, and one given by the devil?

Ans. I shall only here observe, that the word that the devil brings in tends always to some wicked effect; either to make the soul secure or desperate; either to depress it too much to despair, or elevate it too much to presumption. It tends either to disturb and discompose the soul, or else to fill it with false peace and comfort. But it may be still enquired, What if the soul that has been seemingly or really convicted of sin be afterward comforted by the word; how may that be known to be of God, or to be of the devil? To which we reply, We are sure that Satan may give false comfort and joy by words of scripture: the stony-ground hearers received the word with joy, Matth. xiii: 20. but consult the place, in order to find the difference between that joy and the joy of the true believer, that he gets by the word.

1. The seed is said to be received in a stony place. The heart of stone was never made a heart of flesh.

2. They hear the word, and anon with joy receive it; no mention is here of their receiving Christ in the word. Their sudden joy was suspicious, when let in upon a stony heart, not melted with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, in his glory, upon their souls, giving light and heat; the light of life, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the mind and understanding, giving life and heat to the heart and affections. Sudden joy without this is deceitful and delusive.

3. It is said, "They have no root in themselves;" no inward root. True joy is rooted in the inward knowledge of Christ, and Christ revealed in the soul. It is rooted in the faith of the Son of God, in whom believing we rejoice. It is rooted in Christ the true vine, and built upon the sure foundation.

4. It is said to endure but for a while; like John's hearers, that rejoiced in his light for a while; for when tribulation and persecution arises, because of the word, by and by they are offended: they turn enemies and opposites to the persecuted cause of Christ, and have no mind to suffer for any such thing.

These four things discover their joy to be false and delusive. Though it come by the word, yet, when it hath these four defects, that here the Spirit of God speaks of; then it says, that the word that gives them joy comes not right, but by some evil spirit.

FROM SERMON CXXIV.

PAGE 428, &c.

1 Cor. i. 30. Compared with Rev. v. 9.

5. HENCE see a test and proof of true religion, true conversion, and a true work of God, namely, it is such as is of God, as the first cause; to God as the last end; and through Christ as exhibited in the gospel, and his death and blood, as the means. It is said in scripture, "Some return, but not to the Most High;" they are converted, but not to God. We hear of a strange work spreading far and near, and it is called a work of God. How shall we know if it be a work of God, or a delusion of the devil? Here is a touchstone by which it may be tried: let them assert never so confidently, that they are converted to Christ, yet if they are not converted through Christ to God, it is a delusion; it is a false Christ they are taken up with, if he do not bring them to God, to the love of God, to the fear of God, to the law and testimony of God, to all things whatsoever that are commanded of God. If the spirit that is prevailing, to the conversion of many, convert them to the hatred of the cause of God, and the testimony of the time; convert them to a toleration of all the corruptions and defections of the day, as if there ought to be no witnessing work against these; convert them to an opposition of a covenanted work of reformation, and any appearance for it, and so to an involving in perjury; convert them to a dislike of any truth of God, relating either to the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government he hath appointed in his house. If this be the case then so many conversions, so many delusions of Satan are taken place; for the true Christ redeems us to God by his blood; and true conversion converts men to the knowledge of God, to the image of God, and to all the ways, ordinances, and institutions of God; and it is a false conversion that draws men off from any of the ways of God: and may all the Lord's people be delivered from any such conversions.

Here also we may see a test and trial of all the graces and operations of the spirit, if they be true or false.—The knowledge of Christ may here be tried: the knowledge of Christ

would not save you; did not the knowledge of him lead you to the knowledge of God; the knowledge of Christ does not terminate on Christ himself, but is the Midsman and way to bring us to the knowledge of the Father; "I am the way, says Christ; no man cometh to the Father, but by me; and he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," John xiv. 6. 9.—True faith may be here tried; for true faith in Christ, as it is of God, or of divine operation, so it will not terminate on Christ himself, but upon God in and through him; for, "By him we believe in God." 1 Pet. i. 21.—Love to Christ, if it be true love, and of God as its original, it will terminate upon God as the ultimate end and object of it; hence the true knowledge of Christ is a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6.—True joy in the Lord Jesus, terminates in God; hence we joy in God, through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement, Rom. v. 11.

Here is a test of all true experimental religion. True experience leads a man to rest upon no internal feeling of Christ within him: the true Spirit testifies of Christ in the word; and, if Christ be in you, by his Spirit, he will bring you out of yourself, and of all confidence in the flesh, and out of all confidence in internal feelings, and impulses, and impressions, and and will land you in God alone. True experience, like the true Christ, brings no man into himself; no, by no means: he brings us to God; and redeems us to God.

6. Hence see the duty of all lost and undone sinners, that have lost their way to God, and have lost the knowledge of God, the favour of God, the image of God, and the enjoyment of God, *viz.* to accept of a Redeemer, that is come from God to give himself a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice, to redeem us to God by his heart's blood. You are called to accept of a complete redemption that God brings to you, in order to bring you to God; to God you chief end; to God your chief happiness. Here the treasures of God's grace are opened fully and freely to you that have nothing; only come, and welcome: you that are fools, come and get the wisdom that is of God; you that are guilty, come and get a righteousness that is of God; you that are unholy, come and get a sanctification that is of God; you that are unhappy and miserable, come and get a redemption that is of God. Christ is made of God to you all these things, which includes every thing else that you need. Here the weak may get strength, the blind may get sight, the diseased may get health, the dead may get life, the leper may be cleansed, the Ethiopian may be beautified, the captive may be liberated, bankrupts may get their debts paid; only come to, and except of the Redeemer that is come from

God to redeem you to God, and sent of God to bring to God. You cannot come to God because you are weak; and you dare not come, because you are worthless; but, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain:" and, as God sent him once to be a sacrifice to redeem you to God; so he has sent him now as an usher to bring you to God; that you may come to God by him as the way, by him as the guide and the leader. "No matter how great, how atrocious your sins have been hitherto; though you had all the sins of Manasseh, or Mary Magdelene, or Saul the persecutor and blasphemer; yea, all the sins of these that were murderers of the Lord of glory; he who hath redeemed us to God by his blood, by his blood that cleanses from all sin, he has come here in his Father's name, who hath sent him clothed with his vesture dipt in blood, that by him ye may have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace, Eph. i. 7. O Sirs, do you know him when you hear of him? for, faith, and acquaintance with him, come by hearing. Do you know him in his bloody robes? And is it not a robe of grace, grace reigning through righteousness and blood to eternal life? Will you accept of him who is thus come from God, to bring you to God?

"But, say you, will he accept of me who wants faith and "repentance, and such conditions requisite to bring me to God?" Alas! what is this? Behold the malignity of a legal spirit, that rises up against the gospel of the grace of God. What! would you have a faith or a repentance to be a Redeemer to you, instead of Christ to redeem you God! Would you have a faith to be a Christ to redeem you, or repentance to be a Christ to bring you to God? Would you have a Christ within you in your heart, to the disparagement of Christ without you, and revealed to you in the word? Alas! this legal dream flows from the power of the first temptation, "Ye shall be as gods. God only is the first cause and the last end of this whole business of redemption; but ye would be as gods, to be the first cause yourself, you would have something wrought by you, or wrought in you to be the first cause of your own salvation, that God may lose the glory of the work. But, O proud sinner, come down from the height of your desired deity; you are yet desiring to be as God, but come down to God's foot and acknowledge him to be God, and be content that he only be the first cause and the last end, and that Christ be the all in all of your redemption to God. True faith cannot bring itself to God, but only welcomes the Christ of God to bring it to God. Here, O sinner, you have nothing to do, nothing to make; God has made all to your hand; Christ is made of God to you redemption; he is made of God a redeemer by price, to redeem you

to God; and a Redeemer by power, to bring you to God. How love you this bargain? Do you accept of it?

Oh, Sirs! what shall I say? Is there any soul here that would not chuse to be swallowed up for ever in this ravishing mystery of God? Christ, the Redeemer, is the brightness of the Father's glory, by whose blood you are redeemed to God; that is, both to the God of glory, and to the glory of God: to the God of glory, that you may be glorified for ever in him; and to the glory of God, that God may be glorified for ever in you. O Sirs, this redemption through the blood of Christ, is a redemption of God, as the first cause; and a redemption to God, as the last end; and therefore a redemption to be valued, as made of God to you for your everlasting happiness, and made of God to himself for his everlasting honour: therefore, as ye would not trample on the blood of Christ, and as you would regard your own everlasting happiness, which is a great matter, and God's everlasting glory, which is infinitely greater; come, come to this blessed Redeemer, and welcome a redemption made of God to redeem you to God, and to his highest honour and greatest glory. And I will tell you good news, if your heart welcome this Redeemer, in his bloody vesture, for this reason, because he comes from God to bring you to God; and welcome this redemption for this reason, because it is a redemption made and ordained of God, to redeem you to God; then you may be assured that God the Father welcomes you into his everlasting bosom, because his only begotten Son, which is in his bosom, is accepted as God's Sent to you; therefore, says Christ, with a doubled AMEN, a doubled assurance, John v. 24. "Verily, verily, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life."

EXTRACTS

From Sermon cxxix. and cxxx. Vol. 8th, of Ralph Erskine's Works.

FROM SERMON CXXIX.

PAGE 100,—6.

Isa. xliii. 12. *Ye are my witnesses*, &c.

4. HENCE see the duty of the day. Why, what are we called to? Sirs, when the enemies are saying, "Where is your God?" When there comes to be, as it were, competitors with our God, the God of glory, when there are, as it were, different-like Gods upon the field; when their God leads them one way, and our God leads us another way: Why, Sirs, how shall it be known whether the God whom we worship is God? Why, it it seems to be brought to a question, as it was once, 1 Kings xviii. 21. "How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow him: But if Baal, then follow him." Why, Sirs, we need to enquire at this day, when there seem to be strange Gods and strange principles, strange delusions, strange apostacies from our reformation-work; we need to put it to a trial, and see whether Baal be God, or if the Lord is God. What way shall we try it, say you? You are to try it two ways; 1. By what is past. 2. By what is present.

(1.) By what is past. See what the Lord says, in the text here, Isa. xlii. 12. "I have declared, I have shewed, I have saved, when there was no strange God among you." O let us enquire, Sirs, hath not God shewed himself in Scotland unto our reforming fore-fathers, which carried on a work of reformation in a way of solemn covenanting with God? Did he not declare when there was not such strange gods as there are now? Did he not save, did he not shew his glory, did he not declare his name, did he not manifest himself, so as to pour out of his Spirit from on high at times in remarkable ways! But, to come yet nearer home, hath not God declared his name, and saved his people, by giving sweet experience of his powerful presence among us, even in our day, particularly on solemn sacramental occasions? Hath not the Lord sometimes shewed himself, and discovered his glory in the sanctuary, even here, before there were any such strange Gods, such strange principles and o-

pinions, ſuch ſtrange novelties, diſtractions, and deluſions, as now take place? Hath he not ſhewed himſelf? I remember, that at the firſt communion in Dunfermline, after the Lord brought me in his holy providence to this place, he lead me to ſpeak on the back of it in the evening on that word, "The name of the city from that day ſhall be JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, The Lord is there," Ezek. xlviii. 35. Although many here were not then born, yet there are many people witneſſes to atteſt, that from time to time, from ſacrament to ſacrament, God hath been pleaſed to ſhow forth ſomething of his glory; he ſaved, he ſhewed himſelf, he declared his name, before there were any ſuch ſtrange gods among you; therefore, ye are his witneſſes that he is God, that he is the God of Bethel; that he is the ſame God, the ſame immutable God. Whatever changes are now taking place, whatever ſtrange appearances there are on the field, yet know that he is God. *Ye are my witneſſes, that I am God.*

(2.) By what reſpects the preſent time. May it not be ſaid, *Ye are my witneſſes?* What way ſhall it be known at preſent? I ſhall allude to a word ſaid, 1 Kings xviii. 24. "Call ye, ſays Elijah, upon the name of your gods, and I will call upon the name of the Lord: and the God that anſwers by fire, let him be God." Let us meditate a little upon this, "The God that anſwers by fire from heaven, let him be God." It may be ſuppoſed that many of the ſtrange gods anſwered by ſtrange fire, by wild fire; I ſay, there ſeems to be ſome very ſtrange fire amongſt Baal's prieſts, Baal's prophets here, that had ſtrange effects on them, as ye ſee verſe 28. "And they cried aloud, and cut themſelves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood guſhed out upon them." Why, there was a fire, the fire of hell in their boſom, their god it ſeems was a cruel god, he had no mercy on their ſouls or bodies. Yea, you know it is poſſible for Satan to transform himſelf into an angel of light; and when he is transformed into an angel of light, his light may alſo have heat accompanying it; the heat of ſtrong fancy and imagination. How then ſhall we know what is the fire of God, the fire of the Lord, fire from heaven? I think, we may further allude unto this hiſtory, and examine into the matter, particularly in theſe four reſpects:

[1.] Then, fire from heaven is that which comes in the way of acknowledging of God, as the covenanted God of our forefathers; for, as you ſee it in Elijah's prayer here, ver. 36. "Lord God of Abraham, Iſaac, and of Iſrael, let it be known this day that thou art God in Iſrael." Here he acknowledges God, as the covenanted God of their forefathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. The fire then that comes not this way, but rather in

a way of rejecting and abandoning our fore-father's covenanted God, this seems plainly to be strange fire.

[2.] The fire from heaven, it is of such a nature, as it burns up all things that are combustible about our sacrifices. It burns up all things about our services, that we are ready to gaze on and trust in. What was the effect of the fire from heaven? ver. 38. "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." It left nothing but the sacrifices to be trusted unto; it left nothing to be seen, but God, the invisible God. It seems to be strange fire that does not burn up the sacrifices, that does not lick up the water, but leaves something to be gazed on, and removes the proper object of faith; and that makes the object of it the same with the object of sense and imagination; something visible to the eye, something perceptible to the imagination. The fire that does not burn all those things, is strange fire. The fire from heaven burns up all, that there may be nothing to be a ground of faith, but the great, the invisible God; for, true faith is a seeing him that is invisible.

[3.] Fire from heaven, is such fire, as inflames men with zeal, witnessing zeal for God. It makes them acknowledge that the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is God, ver. 39. "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they say, The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." And true fire from heaven makes people fall a witnessing for God, as the people here did for God, the God of their fore-fathers that was in covenant with them. To be sure it appears to be strange fire, that doth not lead people to witness for God, but rather leads people away from witnessing for our covenanted God, who is Scotland's covenanted God and King, and is rather ashamed of that name, and want to bury it.

[4.] The fire from heaven, it fires them with zeal against the false prophets; ver. 20. "And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape; and they took them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."—And whatever was peculiar and extraordinary in this case, I am not to insist on; only, it plainly shews us, that true fire from heaven fills people with zeal for God, and against all the enemies of God, as enemies of his glory; against false prophets and false teachers; against all corruptions and corrupters. Then it must be strange fire in our day that fills people with zeal against these that are witnessing for God, and for the reformation-work, and that makes people cordially embrace and bear with all the intru-

ders and the corruptions, and all the boars and foxes that are in God's vineyard, with all the thieves and robbers there; and that leads people to a countenancing of them, ſtrengthening of their hands, inſtead of witneſſing againſt them. This ſtrange fire that is burning here and there through the land, what is it but the fire of hell mixed with the fire of God's wrath, againſt an apoſtate generation! And if God be ſaying to us this day, *Ye are my witneſſes, that I am God*, let us witneſs for our covenanted God that he is God, that he is King, and that he is our God.

If ye are witneſſes that he is God, your faith and hope will reſt and depend on this leading truth, this truth of all truths, this centre of all truths, 'That he is God:' I ſay, your faith will terminate and reſt upon God the object of faith. He is not the object of fancy or imagination. The object of faith is God, the eternal, inviſible God in Chriſt. It is but a deluſive faith, if your faith does not terminate on God. The object of faith is not Chriſt, but as he is the Chriſt of God; and it looks to God in Chriſt. It is not the word, but as it is the word of God. It is not the promiſe, but as it is the promiſe of God; Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God. The object of faith is not the blood of Chriſt; but as it is the blood of God. It is not the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; but as it is the righteouſneſs of God.—Faith looks to God and reſts upon a God. The faith and hope of a true believer terminates and reſts itſelf upon this, 'That he is God;' hopes for eternal life in him, and from him, becauſe he is God, 1 John v. 11. And if God be giving you his teſtimony this day, ſaying, *Ye are my witneſſes*, then you will be giving him your teſtimonial, ſaying, He is God; he is "IMMANUEL, God with us; JEHOVAH, our righteouſneſs."

FROM SERMON CXXXI.

PAGE 161, &c.

John v. 25. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, &c.*

CONCERNING this hearing of the voice of the Son of God, we offer the following ſix remarks.

(1.) The voice of a man ſtrikes the ear with an external ſound; but the voice of the Son of God ſtrikes the heart with an internal efficacy and energy. To hear the voice of the Son of God, then, is not only a hearing with the ear, but a believing with the heart; *The dead ſhall hear; and they that hear ſhall live.*

(2.) All that hear, shall live; but, indeed, all that are dead, will not hear; for, many have ears, and hear not; and hearing, they do not hear in the sense I have explained; but, "All that the Father hath given me," says Christ, "shall come unto me;" all whose ears God bores and opens, to take up the voice of his Son Jesus Christ, which quickens them.

(3.) Yea, Christ here distinctly commends and extols a twofold grace and virtue of his voice; the dead shall hear the voice; and, it being heard, they shall live. It is no less preternatural for the dead to hear, than it is for the dead to live; it is equally above nature to effectuate the one as the other; but it points out the method of the application of divine grace, and the order of the Spirit's operation. Sovereign efficacious grace, makes first the dead to hear the voice of the Son of God, and then the hearer shall live; the almighty hand of God first bores the ear of the soul; and then, by the bored ear, lets in life to it.

(4.) But these are the secret effects of divine power; the Lord speaks as he did to Isaiah, chapter viii. 11. "With a strong hand," making the voice sound to the centre of the soul. What is spoken only to the ear, dies in the ear; but this still voice of the Spirit, makes its entrance by secret passages into the heart, on which it leaves a stamp and impress of God. Others hear the sound of words and syllables, as well as they; but they do not hear the voice of the Son of God, touching and reaching, catching, quickening and captivating their whole soul.

(5.) It is no delusive oraculous voice, sounding into the natural ear, and giving an imaginary idea and representation of Christ, as a man, so and so glorious and comely; no, no: may God deliver his people from such Satanical delusions, too much supported by some in our day: but here there is no sound of human voices, no sight of human shapes; but a spiritual view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as he is the wisdom of God, and the power of God; and a spiritual hearing of his quickening word of grace in the gospel, coming not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5.

6. It is God's prophesying upon the dead and dry bones, saying, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord, Ezek. xxxvii. 4. Come from the four winds, O breath; and breathe upon these slain that they may live," verse 6. The same words are heard by others, but not with the same power and efficacy; for, now the secrets of the heart are manifest; and God is acknowledged to be in that word of a truth, 1 Cor. xiv. 25. The power of Christ comes along with the voice of the preacher;

and there is no more power to resist, because in the voice of men they hear the voice of God: and till it comes to this, the word hath no saving operation on the soul; yea, till it comes to this, people have eyes, and see not; and ears, and hear not, Isa. vi. 9. Yea, the gospel to them, is the savour of death, not of life,

PAGE 185.

The voice of the Son of God, in the gospel, is not a killing but a quickening voice; it neither destroys souls nor bodies; and hence it cannot be the voice of the Son of God, that casts down bodies into dead fits, and dread-like distortions and disorders; whose voice can this be? Oh! how awful is the delusion of the day! that work cried up for a work of the Spirit of God, that instead of quickening, hath a killing influence upon bodies and souls both!

How delusive is the work that dashes people down into dead fits, and then raises them with raptures, and yet leaves them as they were before, if not worse, enemies to God, and to the work of God, the most glorious work of reformation that ever God wrought for this land, and carried on by solemn covenanting! The quickening voice of the Son of God never tended to destroy the life of bodies, nor to destroy the concern of souls about his declarative glory, and about confessing him and his cause.

The gospel of the grace of God it cannot be, (whatever legal thunders may do) that tends to destroy the life of the body, and also to kill the life of the soul, by destroying all soul concern about public reformation, and the declarative glory of God, and to turn people desperate enemies to the present covenanted work, and witnessing work, against the too palpable defections of the day.

O seek, my friends, to be delivered from the strange delusions, the strange deities, the strange gods of the time wherein you live. Besides, the evident errors of the time, some that profess to be contending against errors, which is so far right and well done; yet are plunged over head and ears, in the gulf of new imaginary doctrines of their own; particularly, that strange doctrine of imaginary ideas of Christ as man. O beware, beware, of an imaginary idea of Christ as man, and of reckoning this to be knowledge or faith! For, that is nothing but a dead image of Christ in the brain, and is no part of rational knowledge, far less of revealed religion. As long as you have but an imaginary idea of Christ, as man, you have no view of the person Jesus Christ; for Christ, as man, was never a person; the eternal Son of God, in our nature,

is the perſon of our IMMANUEL. While you look to a Chriſt painted in the fancy, as man, his voice will never quicken your dead ſouls; but when, by faith, you look to the man Chriſt, as IMMANUEL, God man, and liſten to his voice, as it is the voice of the Son of God, then the dead ſhall hear, and hearing, ſhall live.

O cry mightily to God, that the hour which Chriſt ſays is coming, and now is, may not paſs over without your hearing the voice of the Son of God. The hours of the natural day are paſſing; and ſo are the hours of the goſpel-day. The conjunction of the word and Spirit of Chriſt makes up that bleſſed hour, that happy nick and ſeaſon of ſalvation, the time of love, and the time of life; "There is a river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God; this river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: every thing liveth whitherſoever the river cometh," Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10. Therefore, cry for the promiſed Spirit, the promiſed run of that river; "I will pour waters on the thirſty and floods upon the dry ground," Iſa. xliv. 3. There are ſignal periods of the Spirit, and happy ſeaſons wherein Chriſt utters his almighty voice in the word. When ſuch a ſeaſon cometh, it is an hour that is ever to be remembered; it opens up ſecrets that were in God's boſom from eternity, and brings to light the cabinet counſels of heaven; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our goſpel came not to you in word only, but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt," 1 Theſſ. i. 4, 5. This is the hour of ſpiritual reſurrection; a greater and a more glorious reſurrection than that of your bodies at the laſt day; even as much greater as the value of the ſoul is above that of the body; and becauſe the bleſſedneſs of your bodily reſurrection depends upon this ſpiritual reſurrection by the voice of Chriſt: and terrible will the voice of Chriſt be at the reſurrection of your bodies, unleſs you firſt hear this vital voice of Chriſt quickening you to a ſpiritual life.—Therefore, O cry to God, that the goſpel hour may not paſs over without a quickening power coming along with the word, making it ſink deep into your heart, as well as ſound in your ear. If a heart-concern of this ſort were created in you, it would argue ſome beginnings of life from the dead, and ſome hope in Iſrael concerning you.

A REVIEW

OF WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED

AN EXTRAORDINARY WORK

AT

Cambuslang, Kelsyth, &c.

BY THE REV. JAMES FISHER,

MINISTER AT GLASGOW.

A REVIEW, &c.

SEVERAL papers having been published in favour of what has been called an extraordinary work at Cambuslang, Kelsyth, and other places, it was worth no man's pains to take notice of such of them, whose authors were ashamed to come from behind the curtain; for I am persuaded, that no man of common sense will regard these reflections upon any set of men which the author himself is afraid to own.

It is well known, from sad experience, that when once a people are, in the righteous judgment of God, given up to *strong delusions to believe a lie*, reasoning with them is entirely needless: they will be proof against the strongest arguments from scripture or reason, till such time as the Captain of Salvation overcome the strong man within them, and spoil him of his armour wherein he trusted; and therefore I had once some thoughts of acquiescing in a doctrinal testimony to my hearers as occasion offered, and not to have appeared in the press upon this awful subject: But when I observed that the preface written by Mr. Robe, and other papers lately published, were levelled directly against the whole of our reformation principles, and yet in such a manner, as that the minds of some might thereby be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, I judged it my duty to contribute my mite for vindicating present truth, and contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, especially when the said preface, and other papers of the like nature, are so current in the place and country where adorable Providence hath ordered my lot.

If Mr. Robe and others had contented themselves with giving their own private opinion anent the alledged goodness of that work, perhaps few, if any, would have much regarded it. But when they set up their extraordinary work in opposition to the whole work of God, which he has wrought for us in these lands; when Mr. Robe particularly challenges the late Act of the Associate Presbytery, anent a public fast, as "full of great swelling words, altogether void of the Spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus,—and the most heaven-daring paper that

hath been published, by any set of men in Britain, these hundred years past," he says some one or other of the brethren under some kind of necessity to review the grounds of this bold assertion; especially if it is considered, that, when finding fault with the Presbytery, for charging the promoters of this work, with pleading for a boundless toleration and liberty of conscience, he says, "I know none of my brethren ever did it, and I am so far conscious of my innocency, that I insist upon making your charge good; if you do not, as I am sure you cannot, you have given reason to the world to reckon you slanderers." A slanderer is a very odious character; however, if the charge of lax and boundless toleration-principles is made good against Mr. Robe, and other promoters of this work, he has himself to blame, by giving such a rash challenge, to make good what is abundantly notour to the intelligent world.

As I am not afraid, that the bitter calumnies which Mr. Robe is pleased to throw upon the brethren, will do them much harm among the unprejudiced, so I would never have troubled the world, merely with a vindication of them from such aspersions, well knowing, that there hath been abundance of idle and ridiculous stories handed about with the greatest confidence against them, especially since this work began, whereby it is lamentable, that the Father of lies has got so much acceptable service.

But it is the dishonour done to God, and injury to his cause, and the apprehension that I have, that some may be blindfolded and hardened by Mr. Robe's performance, that induced me to take notice of it: and in the review thereof, I shall first examine the evidence that Mr. Robe adduces for the proof of what he calls an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God; and then enquire into the principles of the promoters of this work, especially with reference to a boundless toleration and liberty of conscience; and lastly, to consider his Address to the Brethren of the Associate Presbytery, anent their late Act for a Public Fast. Under which three heads the substance of the preface may be comprised; and I hope the reader shall find, that what shall be said, is written with the spirit of meekness.

No work can be reckoned extraordinary, but what manifests itself to be so by extraordinary signs, and evidences; since therefore Mr. Robe is pleased to call the work at Kelsyth and other congregations in the neighbourhood, an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, it is reasonable to expect, that he would have mentioned some extraordinary scripture evidences attending this work, which would manifest it to be indeed an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God: But, instead of this, the only extraordinary evidence he gives, is as follows,

Preface, p. 6th & 7th. "This work, ſo extraordinary upon "the ſouls of many in theſe congregations (meaning Kelſyth "and other congregations in the neighbourhood) is the ſame "with that at Cambuſlang: the method of the Spirit's oper- "ation is alike in all theſe congregations, the effects of it upon "the bodies of the awakened, which have not been ſo common "at other times, are alſo much the ſame. The bodies of ſome of "the awakened are ſeized with trembling, fainting, hyſtriſms "in ſome few women, and with convulſive motions in ſome "others;" or, as he expreſſes it, page 8th, "faintings, hyſteric "fits, convulſions, bodily agonies and ſtrugglings."

Mr. Robe acknowledges, page 13th, "That as theſe bodily "agitations are no evidences of perſons being under any ope- "rations of the Spirit of God, alſo all perſons under convul- "ſions, cramps, hyſtriſms, &c. would be ſuch; ſo, upon the "other hand, they are no evidence that theſe thus affected are "under a ſpirit of deluſion—Bodily agitations, (ſays he) conſid- "ered in themſelves are no ſymptoms of perſons being under "the influence either of a good or bad ſpirit." Yet the moſt part of his preface is taken up in juſtifying bodily agitations, which indeed are the only extraordinary evidences I can find mentioned of this extraordinary work. What is ſaid in vindi- cation of theſe ſhall be conſidered after I have taken ſome notice of the original whereof the work of Kelſyth is a copy; for he ſays it is the ſame with that of Cambuſlang; concerning which he tells us, page 6th, "This extraordinary out-pouring of the "Holy Spirit, whereby great numbers of ſecure ſinners are "awakened, and many of theſe converted and filled with faith, "and more than ordinary peace and joy in believing, appears "at firſt, and continues at Cambuſlang; a well atteſted narra- "tive of this hath been publiſhed."

A well atteſted narrative of the real work of converſion, up- on the ſouls of great numbers, is indeed a bold undertaking, eſpe- cially if the number is condeſcended upon, as Mr. M'Culloch takes upon him to do, *Glaſgow Weekly Hiſtory*, *No.* 27, he men- tions two hundred hopefully converted, and *No.* 30, they ariſe to the number of five hundred, who he believes are ſavingly brought home to God, not including counterfeits, and theſe who have nothing but a dread of hell, of which ſort, he ſays, there have been no great numbers; and likewiſe not including theſe that have been awakened by Mr. Whitfield's ſermons in that place; which is indeed a very circumſtantial and daring account.

The reaſon why a ſober man will ſcarce venture to atteſt the real converſions of multitudes is obvious, becauſe there are many hypocrites in the viſible church, by whom all the out- ward evidences of grace may be ſo exactly counterfeited, that

the moſt quick-ſighted Chriſtian may miſtake a hypocrite for a true believer; for although a believer may attain an aſſurance of his own particular intereſt in Chriſt; yet all the evidence we have of the converſion of another, being merely external, we may for the above reaſon, be liable to manifold miſtakes; yet the internal diſtinguiſhing evidences are ſo plainly laid down in the word, that none examining themſelves thereby, under the influence of the ſpirit of truth, but will come to diſcern the real and wide difference between hypocriſy and ſaving grace.

There is no doubt, but all the lovers of Jeſus would earneſtly wiſh, there were many thouſands ſavingly converted, for every one that is here alledged; but people are never in a more dangerous condition, than when they perſuade themſelves, and are ſtrongly perſuaded by others, that they are converted, if, in the mean time they are in the gall of bitterneſs ſtill: yea, though in the judgment of charity, we thought them in a converted ſtate, yet the ſafeſt way would be, to put them upon examining themſelves, whether they be in the faith. Beſides I find the miniſters of Chriſt, who have been honoured of the Lord, to be moſt inſtrumental in convincing and converting work, have been moſt ſelf denied as to their own inſtrumentality, that he who builds the temple of the Lord may have all the glory. The apoſtle Peter was moſt ſucceſsful of any we read of at one time, Acts. ii. 4. But does he ſend letters to all countries round, to acquaint them, that ſuch a day he had been inſtrumental in converting three thouſand? The Lord was pleaſed to ſend down a plentiful rain of divine influences, during the time of Mr. Livingſton's ſermon at the kirk of Shots; but doth he proclaim it through all the world, that ſo many hundreds were converted at that time by his means? Nay, he draws a modeſt veil over it in the hiſtory of his life. They who did not preach themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, were not acquainted with this vain-glorious way of dunning the world with the number of their converts.

With reſpect to the work at Cambuſlang, after which that of Kelſyth is ſo exactly copied, all that the well atteſted narrative ſays of it, amounts to theſe three heads: 1ſt. "That it came "after ſuch preparatives, as an extenſive concern about reli- "gion gradually increaſing, together with extraordinary fer- "vent prayer in large meetings, particularly relating to the "ſucceſs of the goſpel." That is the work of Cambuſlang, according to their own account of it, was produced by their extraordinary fervent deſires of the ſucceſs of the work abroad, whereof Mr. Whitfield was the chief human inſtrument, and to be ſharers of the very ſame Spirit. 2d. After the work was

thus produced, the Narrative does not determine the ſtate of the perſons, ſo exactly, as Mr. Robe doth, namely, that they are really converted, and filled with faith; it only ſays, page 6, that they were awakened to a deep concern about ſalvation, and gave a good account to Miniſters, and others of their convictions and outgate, which many may do, without any ſaving change wrought upon their hearts; not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he who doth the will of my Father who is in heaven; by their fruits ſhall ye know them. 3d. The good fruits mentioned by the Narrative, page 7, are outward reformation, in laying aſide curſing, ſwearing and drunkenneſs, confeſſion of injuſtice in the diſcharge of relative duties, reſtitution, cleaving to their own Miniſters, and attending ordinances diſpenſed by them, (which is a leading mark), ſetting about family and ſocial prayer, deſirable evidences of fervent love to one another, to all men, and even to thoſe who ſpeak evil of them. What deſirable evidences they give of love to ſome men, particularly the Seceders, will be afterwards conſidered, in the mean time, the above fruits, either ſeparately, or taken together, will not be a ſufficient proof of a ſaving work of grace upon the ſoul; for it is well known, that Herod reformed in many things; Judas confeſſed injuſtice, and made reſtitution; they may prophecy in Chriſt's name, and do many wonderful works, to whom he will profeſs, I never knew you, Matth. vii. 22, 23. ſo that if the work at Kettyth, be exactly the ſame, with that at Cambuſlang, it amounts to no more than this, that it was produced by commending Mr. Whitfield and his ſucceſs. He has made people to talk a great deal about convictions and ſeeming outgate, attended with a partial reformation from ſome groſſer vices, and the practice for a time of ſome moral and religious duties which has nothing extraordinary in it at all, excepting, that upon ſuch a ſlender foundation, multitudes of poor people ſhould perſuade themſelves, that they are ſure of heaven, and ſo, if mercy prevent not, may come to die with a lie in their right hand. And if there be any thing extraordinary in numbers; if multitudes before entertained vain hopes of heaven, and now have ſuch a preſumptuous perſuaſion of it, that they will not ſo much as allow their converſion to be ſuſpected, I leave it to every body to judge, whether their eſtate or condition be a whit bettered.

From all which it appears, that abſtracting from the righteous judgment of God there is nothing extraordinary in this work, ſo far as is yet publicly owned by the promoters of it, excepting the extraordinary bodily exerciſe that attends it, namely, (according to Mr. Robe's own word), faintings, hy-

" sterick fits, convulsions, bodily agonies, and strugglings." These he labours by all means, to reconcile with a work of God's Spirit, and in order thereto, he tells us, *Preface*, p. 7. That " as there were the very same appearances, i. e. the very " same bodily agitations, accompanying such an effusion of the " Holy Spirit, in some of our American colonies, so the same " objections were made against them, which have been made " against this appearance of God amongst us." And for a satisfying answer to these objections, he refers them to a sermon of Mr. Edwards, minister of Northampton, of New England, on the distinguishing marks of the work of the Spirit of God.

This Pamphlet of Mr. Edward's is very highly extolled by the promoters of this work; Mr. Whitfield says, he sent the first copy of it to Scotland, and in the Postscript of his letter to Mr. M'Culloch, *Weekly History*, *No.* 25, he says, " There is " a sermon lately published by Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, " of New England, and printed in London, which I desire you " and your friends would have, and recommend most earnestly; " 'tis the best thing of the kind I ever saw; you would think " the author had been at Cambuslang." In obedience to the above order, Mr. Willison, in his preface to that sermon, recommends it most earnestly, for he calls it, " a most excellent, " solid, judicious, and scriptural performance,—most useful to " the church, for discerning a true and real work of the Spirit " of God." And Messrs. Willison, Robe, and Whitfield all concur, in asserting, that Mr. Edwards has answered all the common objections that has been made against this work, either at home or abroad; yea, Mr. Whitfield in his usual strong and unguarded way, affirms, that he has answered all the objections, that any can make against it. But there are hundreds, I hope in Scotland, to whom it is evident, that the objections are so far from being removed, that the very answers to them are further objections to the whole work.

The above, and like warm recommendations, have no doubt influenced some to take for granted, that is said by Mr. Edwards in his sermon, as a sufficient vindication of the work; and there are other persons, who are still persuaded, that the work is delusive, to whom the fallacy of Mr. Edward's reasoning, is not so obvious at first view.

It would require a treatise by itself to follow the chain of error, both in philosophy and divinity, that runs through the whole of this performance; only, because it is cried up, as the standard piece of this work, I shall endeavour to make it appear, that whatever was the intention of the author, yet the manifest design of his work, is to overthrow the very foundation of faith, and all practical godliness, and to establish mere

enthuſiaſm, and ſtrong deluſion, in the room of the true religion, revealed and required in the word.

1ſt, The whole ſcheme of enthuſiaſm or deluſion is built upon this falſe poſition, That we cannot think upon any thing inviſible or ſpiritual without ſome degree of imagination, or that images of ſpiritual things muſt be repreſented to our fancy, elſe we can have no thought about them. Accordingly Mr. Edwards tells us, page 26. "Such is our nature, that we cannot think "of things inviſible, without a degree of imagination. I dare "appeal, (ſays he,) to any man of the greateſt powers of mind, "whether or no he is able to fix his thoughts on God, or Chriſt, "or the things of another world, without imaginary ideas attending his meditations. And the more engaged the mind "is, the more lively and ſtrong will the imaginary idea ordinarily be." Than which nothing can be more falſe and abſurd; for it is certain, that no object can enter the imagination, but which we have ſeen ourſelves before, or has been repreſented to us by others, as viſible or ſenſible; ſo that our ſenſes only, can furniſh the imagination with objects. Now to ſay, that we can have no thought or perception of any thing in the underſtanding, unleſs we have a ſenſible repreſentation of it in the imagination, is the ſame as to ſay, that we can have no conception of any thing but under a corporeal form, and ſo, according to Mr. Edwards, we can have no thought of God, without ſome viſionary form or ſhape, repreſented to our imagination, which is moſt groſs and abominable, and was the firſt riſe of idolatry in the world, Rom. i. 21, 23. They became vain in their imaginations, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beaſts, and creeping things; for it is plain, that they conceived vain images of him in their fancy, before they could ſet up idolatrous repreſentations of him in their temples.

It is true, the Spirit of God, in condeſcenſion to our weakneſs, repreſents ſome of the communicable perfections of God, under the reſemblance of ſome of the members of the human body; ſuch as, the eye, the ear, the hand and the feet, not that we ſhould form the leaſt imagination of any of theſe bodily parts to be in God, but to be laid to a pure conception of what is intended by theſe metaphors. Thus when we hear of an eye aſcribed to God, we ought to think of his knowledge; when we read of his arms and hands, to think of his power, and when bowels are aſcribed to him, to think of his compaſſion. So Chriſt is compared to the ſun, to a vine, to a rock; not that we ſhould form any repreſentation of Chriſt upon our imagination by theſe things, but only to think upon his perſon-

al and mediatorial excellencies, signified by these similitudes. Yea, it is so far from being true, that we cannot fix our thoughts on God or Christ without imaginary ideas, that if there be the least sensible or visionary representation of God or of Christ formed in our imagination, we do that very moment think upon a false God and a false Christ. Our senses and imagination cannot assist us at all in thinking upon the divine nature and perfections. What sensible representation can be formed on the imagination of the eternity, omnipotence, and omniscience and omnipresence of God? We are infinitely removed from any conception of the true God, when the least imaginary idea of him cleaves to our meditations. Hence it follows, that the very reverse of what Mr. Edwards says, is true, namely, "The more engaged the mind is upon any spiritual object, the more lively and strong will imaginary ideas be." I say the very reverse of this is true: yea, there will be no imaginary ideas cleaving to the thought at all; for instance, in the act of believing or receiving Christ, as revealed and exhibited in the gospel promise, I suppose the mind is as deeply engaged, as in any other act whatsoever, but there is not the least imaginary idea cleaving to that act, for if there were the least sensible or visionary representation of Christ upon the imagination, it would not be a believing or crediting the record of God, but a seeing of a sensible object. And indeed this visionary representation of invisible objects in the imagination, has been at the bottom of all the delusions that have ever hitherto taken place in the world, and is the fertile source of all satanical imposture. Accordingly we find,

Note well

2d, That Mr. Edwards acknowledges, that this work is begun by representations of dreadful objects, upon the imagination, which after violent bodily agitations, are succeeded by imaginary or visionary representations, seemingly more agreeable. Page 54. "These who are in such extremity, (viz. of bodily "agony and pain) very often have a lively idea of the horrible "pit of eternal misery, and at the same time, it appears to them, "that a great God who has them in his hands, is exceedingly "angry with them, his wrath appears amazingly terrible to "them, God appearing to them so much provoked, and his "wrath so much incensed, they are apprehensive of great dan-"ger, that he will now forthwith cut them off, and send them "down to the dreadful pit they have in view.—Very many "have an extraordinary sense of their fully deserving that "wrath and destruction, which is in their eyes." The plain obvious meaning of all this is, they have a lively sensible representation, carried in upon their imaginations, of material flames, which they apprehend to be the flames of hell fire, and that the visionary representation may be as horrible, and amaz-

ingly terrible as the cause of it can produce, their bodies at the same time are seized with violent agonies and convulsions, (which is the extremity Mr. Edwards speaks of) in which case, they cannot but apprehend from a natural consciousness of guilt, which Satan works up to horror and despair, that they are just ready to drop into that dreadful pit of destruction, which Mr. Edwards says is then before their eyes; or which is the same thing, of which they have a visionary representation.

If I had ventured to give such an account as this, of the spring and rise of what they call their convictions, they would be ready to call it in question; but I suppose none will discredit the account when it comes from Mr. Edwards, whom they set up as a great patron, and defender of the work; and that I have given the true meaning of his words, will further appear from what he says, page 55. "There have been some instances very "much like these demoniacs that we read of, Mark vii. 16. "ch. ix. 26. of whom we read, that when Satan had cried with "loud voice, and rent them sore, he came out of them; and "probably, (says he) the instances were designed for a type of "such things as these." The scripture account of the demoniacs, spoken of Mark ix. compared with the parallel places amounts to this—Lo a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and bruising him, he pineth away, and it hardly departeth from him. Now, it is undeniable, that these agitations and convulsions spoken of in the text, were the immediate effects of a diabolical possession, and since Mr. Edwards connects such bodily agonies as these, with the marks of the true Spirit, it is no wonder that he falls into that terrible blunder of making the work of Satan *typical* of the work of the Spirit of God; which if I had freedom to use his own words, page 63, "wants but one thing of the unpardonable sin, viz. his saying it against inward conviction."

It is probable that the above remark of Mr. Edwards, has led Mr. Webster into a thought upon the subject, equally extravagant, *Letter*, *page* 32. "Allowing," says he, "that Satan, who no doubt is present at such meetings of the sons of God, was permitted to harass several persons in this extraordinary manner, it would no more prove the work, in general, delusive or diabolical, than the charge could be brought against our Saviour, and such as through his word believed on God, Satan being then permitted to tear multitudes, and cast them down to the ground." As Satan had been permitted to tear and cast on the ground, multitudes of those, who, through the word of Christ, believed on God, which is the only meaning his words can bear to make sense of them. But neither Mr.

Webſter nor any for him, will be capable to make good, that our Saviour's doctrine was attended with ſuch direful and gloomy ſcenes, for there is not the leaſt mention of one, let be multitudes, caſt down to the ground and torn, at any of Chriſt's ſermons. The demoniacs were brought to him for a cure, and it is plain Satan was diſpoſſeſſed before any of them believed, and is as plain that they were torn and caſt down afterwards by him.

Now when perſons are in the above deplorable condition, having their imagination filled with moſt horrible repreſentations, and their bodies at the ſame time, under moſt violent agonies, attended with a hedious expectation of a ſpeedy accompliſhment of all their fearful imaginations, it is no wonder that they do moſt ardently deſire preſent deliverance at any rate; accordingly Satan finding them thus prepared, to wiſh for eaſe at any rate, he ſuits the deliverance unto the nature of the work, by making a repreſentation upon their imagination, of what appears moſt agreeable to their ſenſes, attended with a ſtrong perſuaſion of the reality of what they ſee and hear, and conſequently, that they are really converted, (the ſtrength of the deluſion lying there), ſo they come to be filled with extatic joys and raptures. This is exactly agreeable to Mr. Edwards' own account of their outgate. Page 55. "And "then, (viz. after the condition above deſcribed) light has ap- "peared, and a glorious Redeemer, with his wonderful all- "ſufficient grace, has been repreſented to them, often in ſome "ſweet revelation of ſcripture, ſometimes the light comes in "ſuddenly, ſometimes more gradually, filling their ſouls with "joy and love," &c. and page 27. "They have been in a "kind of extacy, wherein they have been carried beyond them- "ſelves, and have had their minds tranſported into a train of "ſtrong and pleaſing imaginations, and kind of viſions, as tho' "they were wrapt up even unto heaven, and there ſaw glo- "rious ſights." And after this they cannot endure to have their converſion ſo much as queſtioned; yea, it is blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, according to them, to expreſs the leaſt ſuſpicion of it. This brings to remembrance the words of the Lord, Mat. xxi. 43, 44, 45, "When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt and finding none—Then he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe from whence I came out, and when he is come, he findeth it empty, ſwept and garniſhed. Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there, and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt." Not to inſiſt upon illuſtrating every word in this parable, the ſcope thereof, as applicable to the preſent

purpoſe, ſeems to be this, viz. When Satan hath ſo filled the imagination with dreadful repreſentations, that the perſon wants eaſe at any terms, then having gained his end, he goes out of the man in that terrible ſhape, or frees his imagination of thoſe frightful ideas that haunted it before, and then by the means of more pleaſing and delightful ſenſations, he returns into the perſon thus prepared for his more dangerous reception, with the devil of pride, preſumption, confident perſuaſion, and the like, attended always with an averſion to any teſtimony for the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, and ſo the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt. "All other reformations," ſays Mr. Halyburton, in his memoirs, "proves but a ſweeping and garniſhing while the ſoul is empty of Chriſt: it may be ſwept from the filth of flagitious ſins, and garniſhed with the paint of religion, or ſome habits of moral virtue, but none of theſe will keep out the devil."

3d, Mr. Edwards being abundantly ſenſible, that there is no example of ſuch frightful or delightful ſenſations and imaginations above deſcribed, to be found in the experience of the ſaints of God recorded in ſcripture; therefore he falls upon the ſhort way of ſetting aſide ſcripture experience altogether, from being any ſtandard, whereby to judge of the conformity of our experiences to the work of the Spirit of God upon others, as deſcribed in the word; for he ſays, page 20. "No deviations "from what has hitherto been uſual, let it be never ſo great, "is an argument that a work is not a work of the Spirit of "God." Page 23. he argues, That though there be no inſtances in ſcripture of ſuch extraordinary effects upon the bodies of men, yet there is no force in the objection, if there be not ſcripture rule excluding ſuch things. We ought indeed to exclude from our practice and imitation, every thing that wants the authority of ſcripture rule or example; but then we muſt acknowledge, the binding force of ſcriptural example, even when there is no ſcripture rule expreſsly enjoining the thing in as many words. For it has always been ſtremuouſly maintained by Proteſtants againſt the Papiſts, that neceſſary and evident ſcripture conſequences, and imitable ſcripture example, are of equal authority with ſcripture precepts. And therefore ſince convulſions, hyſteric fits, and bodily agonies, followed with viſionary repreſentations of ſeemingly delightful objects, are not recorded, as attending the ſpiritual experiences of the ſaints, they are contrary to ſcripture example, which is the ſame thing in this caſe, as to be excluded by a ſcripture rule. However there is no want of plain ſcripture rule, diſcharging all imaginary ideas of God, or, which is the ſame thing, excluding all ſenſible repreſentations of God, or

of Chriſt from our imaginations, as abſolutely unlawful, being directly forbidden, both in the firſt and ſecond commandments.

But, further, in the room of ſcripture-pattern in the experiences of the ſaints, Mr. Edwards ſets up a mechanical extra-ſcriptural example, whereby he affirms, perſons are greatly affected by ſeeing others ſo; for page 29, he ſays, that "The ſame thing may be ſignified more fully and effectually by actions than by words." I own in things mechanical it is ſo, a tradeſman may ſhew his apprentice, how ſuch a piece of work is to be done, by doing the like himſelf, which will be a more effectual ſignification of his mind, than mere verbal directions could be; but in things ſpiritual it is abſolutely abſurd, for faith cometh by hearing the word of God and not by the example of any man whatſoever. I am not here ſpeaking againſt the uſefulneſs of examples, in practical godlineſs, but of that ſecret impulſe, communicated by the example of others, whereby a perſon is affected in like manner even though there be not a word ſpoken; for it is of this and not the former, that Mr. Edwards ſpeaks. Accordingly, page 29th, he adds, "Though the impreſſion that is made upon them ſhould be only by ſeeing tokens in the behaviour of others without hearing them ſay one word:" which is exactly the language of Quakers, a branch of that helliſh ſcheme, calculated for enervating and overthowing the divine authority of the word, as it is the only foundation of faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And that Mr. Edwards wants to ſet aſide the word as the only rule, at leaſt in judging and trying this work, will plainly appear from what he ſays, page 44. "Whatſoever Spirit removes our darkneſs, and brings us to the light, does us a kindneſs; if I am brought to the ſign of truth, and am ſenſible of the things, as they be, my duty is immediately to thank God for it, without ſtanding firſt to enquire by what means I have ſuch a bleſſing," without enquiring whether I have it by the means of the word, or by a ſatanical impoſture, which is quite contrary to the expreſs letter of the text; which Mr. Edwards pretends to inſiſt upon, Try the ſpirits whether they are of God.

4th, Mr. Edwards being aware that this work, which he ſo much patronizes, cannot ſtand the trial of the diſtinguiſhing marks of a ſaving work of grace upon the ſoul; he is therefore, for ſtating no ſpecial difference between common and ſaving grace, or drawing any dividing line between ſaints and hypocrites, page 71. "There is a judging of ſome ſort or other, that the ſcriptures very ſtrictly prohibits:—it is plain that, that ſort of judging is forbidden, that God claims as his prerogative, whatever it be. And if we examine we will find,

" that the judging of hearts, that is ſpoken of as God's prero-
" gative, is not only the judging of the aims and diſpoſitions
" of men's hearts in particular actions, but chiefly the judging
" of the ſtate of the hearts of the profeſſors of religion, with
" regard to that profeſſion—To diſtinguiſh hypocrites that
" have a form of godlineſs from true ſaints is the proper, yea,
" the main buſineſs of the day of judgment; they therefore
" do greatly err, who take it upon them poſitively to deter-
" mine who are ſincere and who not, and to draw the divid-
" ing line between true ſaints and hypocrites." No reaſona-
ble man ever pretended to judge men's hearts, otherwiſe than by their outward actions; this is not the queſtion in debate; but the queſtion is, whether miniſters ought not doctrinally to declare, that there is a ſpecific difference between common and ſaving grace, and between both theſe and the deluſions of Satan, and conſequently whether they ought not to point out theſe diſtinguiſhing marks from the word, and that chriſtians examine themſelves thereby, that they may know whether they have grace in reality, or the counterfeit of it only: this is what we affirm to be the indiſpenſable duty both of miniſters, and people, according to 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourſelves whether you be in the faith; which certainly points out the duty of miniſters, to be very particular in offering diſtinguiſhing marks from the word, and the duty of people to examine themſelves thereby.

But Mr. Edwards is againſt ſuch a narrow and ſtrict ſearch, as it would tend to diſcover the whole myſtery of iniquity, that Satan is carrying on by his devices; and therefore we find that the poſitive marks which he gives of the true Spirit, ſumed up page 50. are no way diſtinguiſhing; they are ſuch as will agree not only with common influences of the Spirit; but even with the deluſions of Satan. For tho' he is confident, that he has given an enumeration of diſtinguiſhing marks, that he ſays, they are ſufficient to determine this work, to be the work of God, unleſs the apoſtle John was out of his rules, and page 56. " If the apoſtle John knew how to give ſigns of a work " of the Spirit of God, this is ſuch a work;" yet it will be obvious to any intelligent chriſtian, that a perſon may have all the marks he condeſcends upon, as he treats them, and yet be under a groſs deluſion; for he is exceeding lame in his account; he makes not the leaſt mention of faith apprehending Chriſt in the word of promiſe, nor of the neceſſity of it, not a word of the inward conflict that is in the believer with a body of ſin and death; nor a deſire to have the heart ſearched by the candle of the word, in the hand of the Spirit; nor of any concern for the declarative glory of God, and contend-

ing for the preſent truth, in oppoſition to the indifferency and neutrality of the world; although theſe and many more diſtinguiſhing marks, are to be found in the writings of the apoſtle John from whence Mr. Edwards pretends to have made a full enumeration of the marks of the true Spirit.

And it is ſaid for Mr. Edwards, that he is giving the marks of a divine influence of the Spirit of God, in oppoſition to a diabolical influence, or deluſion, becauſe he ſays, page 49. "There are common influences of the Spirit which are often miſtaken for ſaving grace, but theſe are out of queſtion, becauſe though they are not ſaving; yet they are the work of the true Spirit." And page 52. "Whether perſons' convictions, and the alterations in their diſpoſitions and affections be in a degree and manner that is ſaving, is beſide the preſent queſtion." But let it be conſidered, that as he lays down no marks of diſtinction, between a common operation of the Spirit, and a deluſion of Satan; ſo granting this work were the effect of a common operation of the Spirit, yet if it goes no farther, perſons will be as effectually ruined in the iſſue, as they could be by a ſatanical impoſture.

Again, it is obvious from the whole tenor of his diſcourſe, that it is ſo laid, as to make people believe he is giving the marks of a ſaving operation of the Spirit on the ſouls of men, and that he is accounting for ſome uncommon appearances, that preſently attends ſuch a gracious work; if it were not ſo, why is it ſo mightily cried up, as an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God? why ſo much noiſe about the numbers of converts, who are deſcribed and pointed out as gracious perſons, in all the papers publiſhed in defence of this work? and why are they declared guilty of the unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, who ſpeak a word againſt it, as Mr. Edwards does? page 63. And I find all the writers on that ſide, eſpecially the clergy, copy after his example, which indeed is an effectual way to impoſe upon the ignorant; but they that know their God, will not be ſo eaſily beat out of their religion and reaſon by big words.

Further, Mr. Williſon, who may be ſuppoſed to have peruſed the ſermon of Mr. Edwards, ſays of it in his preface thereto, that, "it will prove moſt uſeful to the church, for diſcerning a true and real work of the Spirit of God, and for guarding againſt deluſions and miſtakes." By a true and real work of the Spirit of God, he cannot but mean a ſaving work, elſe he impoſes upon the world, by ſuch a preface, wherein he ſays, "The Lord is come ſuddenly into his temple, by a glorious miniſtration of his Spirit with the word, firſt in America, then in Britain itſelf, particularly in ſeveral places of the weſt of Scotland, whereby many are awakened and converted from ſin,

to God." But after all, as I hinted before, none of the positive marks, especially as Mr. Edwards explains them, (which I need not here transcribe, the book being so common) will serve to prove this work to be the effect of divine influence; they may be found every one of them, in a person that is under the delusion of Satan. Many judicious divines, such as, Guthrie, Shepherd, Burges, and others, do evince from the word, that hypocrisy and delusion, may be attended with higher marks, than any that Mr. Edwards has condescended upon.

From what has been said, it too evidently appears, that this grand performance of Mr. Edwards, so much applauded by the promoters of this work, is just calculated for supporting enthusiasm, and consequently for razing the very foundation of faith, and all practical godliness; and therefore, I am sorry that Mr. Willison has so rashly, to say no worse, recommended it to the Scots reader, what is so manifestly eversive of all true religion, and directly contrary to all that he formerly preached and published to the world, till of late, and shall earnestly wish he and others may in time see their mistake, and honestly retract what they have done.

Although Mr. Robe says, it would be superfluous and unnecessary to answer apart after Mr. Edwards, yet he thinks fit to make the following remarks, some of which, by the by, are the same with what Mr. Edwards makes before him.

1st. Mr. Robe observes, *Pref. page* 28. "That there are some who do not cry out in the congregation, neither have any of the aforesaid bodily seizures, who have been under a law work for some months, and are, so far as we can know the state of another, savingly converted. And there are others who have been under the severest bodily distress, in whom the work of conviction and conversion, as to the main strokes of them, answer to the former, as face to face in a glass." Hence he infers, that no thinking person will conclude, that all is delusion with the latter, merely because their bodies were strangely disordered, seeing they have the same incontestible evidences of conversion with the former.

To this I answer, 1st, Although Mr. Webster, artfully insinuates, *Letter, page* 12. That it has been charged upon the gentlemen of the Secession, as he calls them; and drawn as an inference from their writings, "That not one soul can be converted within the pale of the established church of Scotland;" yet none of these ministers ever said so, and I believe never thought so; yea, as I hinted before, they would rejoice to see thousands for one really converted, and that the gathering of the people were united unto the Shiloh. I may add further, that their charity is not so narrow, but that they think, that

many are in the eſtabliſhed church, and carried off with the deluſion of the day, who were formerly, and conſequently ſtill are gracious perſons, whoſe eyes the Lord may yet open in his time. But then, 2d, The inconteſtible evidences of converſion, as enumerated either by the Narrative, or by Mr. Edwards, or by Mr. Webſter, falling ſhort of the diſtinguiſhing marks of a ſaving work of the Spirit of God; perſons that have no other evidences, whether ſuch as have been under the ſevereſt bodily diſtreſs, or ſuch as have none of theſe bodily ſeizures, they may exactly correſpond to one another, as face anſwereth face in a glaſs, and yet both be under a groſs deluſion: for my part, I ſhould think myſelf unfaithful to my truſt, as a miniſter, if I made people depend ſolely upon ſuch evidences of converſion, as I find inſiſted upon by the promoters of this work. Let the following ſcriptures be conſidered, Ezra ix. 6, &c. Pſalm cvi. 6, 7, &c. Ezek. ix. 4. Rom. vii. 21, 23, 24.

The 2d remark that Mr. Robe makes, is, "That faintings, hyſteric fits, convulſions, bodily agonies, and ſtrugglings, may be the effects of ſudden fears, a great ſorrow upon worldly ground, and therefore he ſees no reaſon why legal terrors and fears, and a ſtrong apprehenſion of the wrath of God in perſons, ſhould not have the like effects upon their bodies."

As Mr. Robe has this remark entirely from Mr. Edwards, ſo I have anſwered it above. It is obvious to any that underſtand philoſophy or common ſenſe, that theſe bodily agitations and agonies can be nothing elſe but the effects of a ſtrong impulſe upon the imagination, and cannot poſſibly be the immediate effects of the actings of the ſuperior faculties of the ſoul, ſuch as the underſtanding and will; theſe can produce no ſuch effects as are here mentioned; and therefore, ſince it is not pretended in the preſent caſe, that theſe faintings, convulſions, &c. are the effects of ſudden fear, or grief on wordly grounds, it is impoſſible but that they muſt flow from a worſe cauſe. The ſeat of the operations of the Holy Spirit is the ſuperior powers of the ſoul, Satan has eaſy acceſs to the imagination: all horrible or pleaſing viſionary repreſentations that are formed there are from him only, 2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10, 11.

Mr. Robe obſerves, 3d, That there is much reaſon to conclude, "that the work of God in converting many in ſeveral pariſhes in the Shire of Air, and other places in the weſt, from the year 1625 to 1630, was attended with much the ſame appearances with this now." And ſo he tranſcribes at large the account which the author of the Fulfilling of the Scripture gives of what was then nick-named the Stewarton Sickneſs. Mr. Webſter imagines this ſtory makes ſo much for their purpoſe, that he likewiſe gives it room in his Letter, page 37, ſo that

I need not tranſcribe it a third time, ſince it is now ſo current. From the ſaid quotation, Mr. Robe infers, "The ſimilitude and likeneſs of this work amongſt us, unto *that referred to*, ſeems evident; and can theſe bodily *effects mentioned be juſt* grounds of objection againſt this work *now, and not alſo* againſt the other?" But I muſt be allowed to ſhew, *that there* is the wideſt difference between the preſent work, and the work of God then, in every reſpect.

1ſt, It muſt be obſerved, that the author of the Fulfilling of the Scripture is there giving inſtances of the remarkable outlettings of the Spirit, attending the miniſtry of thoſe who were honoured to be moſt inſtrumental in carrying on reformation work. The firſt inſtance he gives, is the ſucceſs that attended the miniſtry of our firſt reformers, ſuch as Luther, Melancton, Zuinglius and others abroad; and Mr. George Wiſhart at home; and then he mentions the extraordinary outletting of the Spirit in the weſt of Scotland, about the year 1625, quoted by Meſſrs. Robe and Webſter, accompanying the miniſtry of thoſe, who were bearing any teſtimony at that time, under hot perſecution from the prelatic party, particularly at Irvine, under the miniſtry of the famous Mr. Dickſon; and after other inſtances of the like nature, he ſpeaks of "the remarkable time wherein the Lord did let forth of his Spirit on his people in the year 1638, when the nation did ſo ſolemnly enter into covenant with God, then did the nation own the Lord, and was viſibly owned by him, much zeal and an enlarged heart did appear for the public cauſe." So that the author is ſpeaking of the outlettings of the Spirit that have accompanied public as well as perſonal reformation. But can any of the promoters of this work alledge for themſelves, that they are making the ſame eſſay towards public reformation, as it has been owned and profeſſed in theſe lands; nay, as ſhall afterwards be made appear, they are doing what they can to obliterate the memory of Scotland's covenanted reformation, and to raze all concern about it out of the minds of the people.

Mark it well

Again, the Lord's work at Irvine, at the time mentioned, was not attended with ſuch cloudy appearances, as cleave unto this preſent work among us, all that is ſaid of the people at that time is, "Many were ſo ſhocked and taken by the heart that thro' terrors, the Spirit in ſuch a meaſure convincing them of ſin in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the church, who afterwards proved moſt ſolid and lively Chriſtians."

This paſſage Mr. Webſter thinks ſo much to the point in hand, that he cannot omit tranſcribing it, Letter, page 36.

But it is obſervable, that the occaſion of their falling over, was the overpowering influence of the Spirit of God upon their ſouls in the hearing of the word, which is not refuſed in ſome circumſtances; but in the preſent caſe, multitudes fall over without hearing a word ſpoken, as Mr. Edwards allows to be the caſe abroad, unto which it is granted that the work at home is ſimilar, and known in this inſtance to be ſo in fact, ſeverals having owned, that it was not by means of any word ſpoken or brought to their remembrance that they underwent bodily ſeizures; but beſides there is no mention of their bitter outcryings, convulſions, bodily agonies and ſtrugglings, which are the ordinary concomitants of the preſent work.

Since then the inſtruments whom the Lord employed in the weſt of Scotland at the time ſpoken of, where men who were the objects of hot prelatic perſecution, becauſe they witneſſed againſt them, as is fairly enough inſinuated by the author, and ſince it was by the means of goſpel ordinances orderly diſpenſed, that the Spirit of the Lord was poured down upon the ſouls of the people, in time of hearing, in ſuch a plentiful meaſure, that their frail bodies were inactive for a time, without the leaſt agony, convulſion or ſtruggling; and ſince the preſent work has all the contrary appearances attending it, it plainly follows there is no ſimilitude between this and the former; and therefore, ſince Meſſrs. Robe and Webſter have been ſearching the author of the Fulfilling of Scripture, in queſt of an example of the work which they ſo much cry up, I ſhall put them in mind of a paſſage from the ſame author, much nearer the point in hand in all reſpects; *Great Appearances of God for his Church under the New Teſtament*, page 201. "Wherever in any of the churches the Lord hath had ſome ſpecial work on foot, and the intereſt of the goſpel gaining ground, Satan then hath followed the ſame remarkably with ſome cloſe and ſubtile aſſault, in bringing forth ſomething of his work in reſemblance thereto, to beget prejudice againſt the way of truth. It was unqueſtionably one of the moſt ſearching trials the German Church had, by that ſtrange appearance of the Anababtiſts there. But this being ſo notour and public in the hiſtories of theſe late times; beſides other remarkable inſtances of the like kind, I forbear to mention it further. One memorable paſſage, that is known to many; may be for ſome advantage, and confirming to the truth, the inſerting of it here: When the goſpel was flouriſhing in the Church of Ireland, by the Miniſtry of ſome eminent ſervants of Chriſt, who were labouring there ſome years before the rebellion, and a moſt extraordinary time of the power of the Spirit following the ordinances, when others of Satan's devices, to caſt a let in the way, had proved

abortive this great deſtroyer, was at laſt let looſe in a ſtrange manner, to eſſay a counterfeit of the work of the Lord there. This firſt began about Lochlearn upon ſeveral ignorant perſons, who in the midſt of the public worſhip, fell a breathing and panting as thoſe who had run long, with ſtrange pangs like convulſions; yea, thus they were affected, whatever purpoſe was preached, even by ſuch miniſters, who were known enemies to the truth, the number of which ſtill increaſed through ſeveral pariſhes for a time. At firſt both miniſters and chriſtians were put to a ſtand; but afterward upon farther diſcovery of the tendency of their way, and finding no ſolid convincing work, which had therewith any ſenſe of their ſin, or panting after a Saviour, did quickly perceive this to be one of the depths of Satan, and his deſign to ſlander and diſgrace the work of the Lord,—yea, it was evident, how ſuch did continue afterwards rude, profane and ignorant. Through this engine did the devil thus drive to beget prejudices amongſt thoſe that did look on at a diſtance, againſt the power and life of religion."

The 4th remark Mr. Robe makes is, "That in New England, where hundreds were affected in their bodies, the ſame way ſeverals with us are; the moſt part of theſe who are tho't to be convicted, have continued now for ſome years to profeſs ſerious godlineſs, and to practice it, without returning to their former follies: and ſhall we not hope the ſame of theſe converted among us, ſeeing alſo they have continued for ſeveral months, in a deſirable way."

As to the work in New England, the reader may judge of it from an account given thereof, in a proteſtation preſented to the Synod of Philadelphia, June 1ſt, 1741, printed at Philadelphia the ſaid year, and ſubſcribed by twelve miniſters and eight elders; where ſpeaking of Mr. Gilbert Tennent, and others of Mr. Whitfield's adherents, they teſtify, page 11, againſt their preaching the terrors of the law in ſuch a manner and dialect, as has no precedent in the word of God, but rather appears to be borrowed from a worſe dialect: and ſo induſtriouſly working on the paſſions and affections of weak minds, as to cauſe them to cry out in a hideous manner, and fall down in convulſion like fits, to the marring of the profiting both of themſelves and others, who are ſo taken up with ſeeing and hearing theſe odd ſymptoms, that they cannot attend to hear what the preacher ſays; and then after all, boaſting of theſe things as the work of God, which we are perſuaded do proceed from an inferior or worſe cauſe." This concurring teſtimony of ſo many miniſters and elders of the Preſbyterian perſuaſion, who had full acceſs to know the ſtate

of matters as to religion in our American colonies, will certainly find credit with all sober thinking persons: And if we judge of the continuance of a profession in New England, by the continuance of it (such as it was) in several places of the west of Scotland, we cannot but conclude that there is little or a profession, to be found among that people by this time; for it is most remarkable, that within the space of less than eight months, this work is as suddenly decaying in the place where it began, as it rose at first, and in other places, it has begun and decayed in much shorter time, even though all possible means have been used to preserve it in vigour; and it is obvious to common observation, that it has happened, at least to these who were immoral and had not a profession before, according to the true Proverb, 2 Pet. ii. 22. The dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Under this head Mr. Robe pretends, "To give instances from the holy scripture of things exactly similar to these bodily distresses, which he says are to be found in our case." But because Mr. Webster mentions these instances more distinctly, I shall consider them as they stand in his letter page 35, 36. For a scripture instance of crying out under the ministry of the word, or in time of public worship, he cites, Acts ii. 37. and tells us that three thousand wounded souls cried out at once. Whereas the text runs thus, When they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethern what shall we do? Here there is not the least mention of crying or screaming, but only that they said or spoke with that calmness and composure of mind, which attends the operations of the true Spirit. Nor is it said that they spake all at once, as Mr. Webster affirms, which would make a confused and unintelligible sound; nor that they spoke in time of Peter's sermon, but after he had finished and applied his discourse, verse 36, the success thereof appeared in a convincing work of the Spirit of God, which was intimated to him and the rest of the apostles, by severals of the multitude, verse 37, some speaking (in the interval) to one of the apostles, and some to another: whereupon Peter begins another discourse suitable to their case, verse 38, a great part whereof is not recorded, for it is said, verse 40, that with many other words, he did testify and exhort. The issue of all, verse 41, That the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls: so that this passage makes nothing for the bitter outcryings that have been heard among the people at Cambuslang, Kelsyth, and other places, in time of public worship, to the marring of both their own and the edifi-

cation of others. And the other text that he quotes from Mr. Edwards will make as little for his purpoſe, Pſalm xxxii. 2. When I kept ſilence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. If Mr. Webſter had proved that this roaring was in time of public worſhip, it had been to the point; but I ſuppoſe that though the roaring be taken in a literal ſenſe, it will be granted that it was in ſecret, and none was diſturbed therewith. However, if this roaring be underſtood literally of a great noiſe, why may not other expreſſions of the like nature be taken in a literal ſenſe likewiſe? ſuch as, my moiſture is turned into the drought of ſummer; my loins are filled with a loathſome diſeaſe, my heart is ſmitten and withered like the graſs; and my bones are burnt as an hearth. Which paſſages and the like, if literally underſtood, would be inconſiſtent with natural life, and therefore all ſound interpreters underſtand them in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as expreſſive of the degree of the ſoul's exerciſe.

Again, for ſcripture inſtances of trembling, fainting, falling down as dead, he cites the Jailor, Paul at his converſion, and the apoſtle John in the Iſle of Patmos. As for the Jailer, there was a concurrence of extraordinary Providences that occaſioned his trembling, which cannot be plead in the preſent caſe; The foundations of the priſon were ſhaken by a great earthquake, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were looſed, Acts xvi. 26. This, together with his being happily prevented from ſelf-murder, and diſappointed of his fears, with reſpect to the eſcape of the priſoners, made him come trembling and fall down before Paul and Silas, in the way of civil homage only, it being the cuſtom of Eaſtern nations, to pay their homage in ſuch an humble manner, as the continuators of *Pool* obſerve on this place; and it was after all this that the man's conſcience was thoroughly awakened, when he ſaid, verſe 30. Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved? As to the inſtance of Paul's falling to the ground, Acts ix. 4. upon the occaſion of a light from heaven ſhining round about him, it is plain that as he was to be employed in the office of an apoſtle, ſo he behoved to have an immediate commiſſion from the Lord Jeſus, which he received at that time, Acts xxvi. 16. But there can be no argument drawn from this as a precedent for falling down, when no ſuch extraordinary occaſion for it can be pretended unto.

And though it is ſaid, Rev. i. 17. That the apoſtle John fell down as dead, upon the glorious viſion, that he had of the Son of God, or that Daniel had no ſtrength remaining in him, upon the ſame occaſion; can there be any argument drawn from theſe extraordinary privileges conferred upon

ſome eminent ſaints of God, and the effects of them, to ſupport the bodily agonies of ignorant people, who are not ſo much as alledged to be converted while in that diſmal caſe? Upon the whole, Mr. Webſter and others muſt not imagine, that their bare mentioning of the above inſtances, will paſs for argument; for, let the matter be narrowly examined, and it will be found, that there is not the leaſt ſhadow of an example in ſcripture that runs parallel to the fainting, down fallings, convulſions and ſtrugglings, that take place at preſent, excepting the inſtances of the Demoniacs, Mark xi. 18. Luke ix. 39. which the reader may conſult.

Laſtly, Mr. Robe, *Pref. page* 10, ſeriouſly begs of thoſe who look upon this work as a deluſion, that they would direct him and other miniſters how they ſhall anſwer diſtreſſed perſons, who come to them crying bitterly, what ſhall we do to be ſaved? And accordingly he wants direction what to anſwer in the following caſes, which he propoſes by way of queſtion, as ſo many natural conſequences of reckoning this to be the work of the devil.

Queſ. 1ſt. Shall we tell them they are not Chriſtleſs and unconverted, when we evidently ſee many of them ſuch? Anſ. By no means, only beware of looking upon perſons to be Chriſtleſs and unconverted, merely becauſe they are Seceders, as Mr. Robe does, Narrat. page 27. where he ſays, that ten or twelve who deſerted his miniſtry, "were of no conſideration as to ſerious religion or even knowledge, except one, who ſometime ſince ſaw his error, and returned." Whereas it is well known, that the Seceders in that pariſh are in the judgment of charity, of as great conſideration as to ſerious godlineſs, as any that Mr. Robe can boaſt of in his congregation; and as for their knowledge, ſo far as I am informed, I would not be afraid to venture them upon a comparative trial with the new converts themſelves. Queſt. 2d. Shall we tell them that the fears of the wrath of God, is only all but deluſion? Ans. If their fears are the effect of a heated imagination and flow from a ſenſible repreſentation of horrible objects upon their fancy, do not fail to tell them, that this is nothing elſe but deluſion. Queſt. 3, ſhall we tell perſons lamenting their curſing, ſwearing, Sabbath breaking, and other immoralities that it is the devil who makes them ſee thoſe evils to be offenſive to God, and deſtructive to their ſouls? Ans. Though the devil cannot make them ſee theſe or any other evils, as they are offenſive to God, yet he may prompt them to reſt in a partial reformation, well knowing that Publicans and Harlots, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, or be more eaſily reclaimed than ſelf-

righteous perſons. Queſt. 4th, "Shall we tell them, who under the greateſt uneaſineſs, enquire at us what they ſhall do, to get an intereſt and faith in Chriſt, that Satan is deluding them, when they ſhew any concern this way? Anſ. It is eaſe from their frightful apprehenſions, that they want upon any terms, or if they are looking for a intereſt in Chriſt, upon their own doings in whole or in part, or upon their own act of believing, and are not brought quite off from a righteouſneſs within them, to receive and reſt upon Chriſt alone in the word, whatever concern they may ſeem to have, Satan is certainly deluding them. Queſt. 5th, Shall we pray and recommend it to them to pray, to deliver them from ſuch deluſions. Anſ. By all means, as you would deſire to recover them from the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. Upon the whole, Mr. Robe ſays it would be worſe than deviliſh, to treat the Lords ſighing priſoners at this rate: what is worſe than deviliſh, I know not. I find that the frightful terms relative to the devil and hell, are the very Shiboleth of the party; but if I know any thing worſe than deviliſh, I think miniſters perſuading poor ignorant deluded people, that they are privileged people, comes neareſt it; whereas they ought to call them to ſearch and try their ways, and turn again unto the Lord, to examine themſelves whether they be in the faith, and to cauſe Jeruſalem to know her abominations, Ezek. xvi. 2. and like faithful watchmen to hear the word at God's mouth, and to give the people warning from him. But it is matter of regret, that it ſeems to be verified with reſpect to the promoters of this work, what the Lord ſays, Jer. vi. 13, 14. From the prophet even to the prieſt every one dealeth falſely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

There are two objections which Mr. Robe endeavours to remove, which I believe will ſtand in full force after all.

The firſt is, "That it cannot be the work of the Holy Ghoſt, and any real or true converſion, which is ſo open to public notice, and makes ſo much noiſe, for our Lord ſaith, Luke xvii. 20. "The kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation." For the removal of this objection, after an angry criticiſm on the Greek word, which is ſo little to his purpoſe that it makes againſt himſelf; he alleges, as Mr. Edwards had done before before him, "That our Lord doth not in the leaſt inſinuate, that the coming of the kindom of God, in the converſion of Jews and Gentiles, was to be ſilently ſet up without noiſe and unobſerved. Did not the converſion of Samaria quickly reach the ears of the church at Jeruſalem? Were not the converſions from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity with obſervation." All this is,

but a weak and trifling evaſion; for though the apoſtles who were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, Acts viii. 14. and though the converſion of the Jews will be obſerved, when it ſhall pleaſe the Lord to bring about that glorious event; yet what ſays this to oſtentation and outward ſhow wherewith this work is attended; for the objection is, that both the promoters of the work, and they who are enſnared therein, make ſo much noiſe about their converſion, and the number of their converts, that it is inconſiſtent with that modeſty and humility which is the inſeparable concomitant of a work of God. The flattering, and great ſwelling words of vanity, wherewith Meſſ. Webſter, Whitfield, and others, ſet off this work, are truly grating to the ears of any humble and ſelf-denied Chriſtian. Who ever denied that the work is obſervable, for ſo is every remarkable thing in the world, whether it be good or bad? But it is their vain-glorious boaſting of it, and their high encomiums of themſelves in their journals hiſtories and pamphlets, wherewith the world is dunned, this we ſay is contrary to the character of the kingdom of God, which cometh not with obſervation; for the kingdom of God, is not in word; but in power. 1 Cor. iv. 20. Our life is hid with Chriſt in God. The more of God, and the leſs of man is ſeen in any work, it ſpeaks it ſo much the more to be of God. The ſaints of God cannot endure to draw the admiration of the world after them. Not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be the glory. It is the character of the beaſt to have all the world wondering after him, Rev. xiii. 3. It is moſt obſervable, that the Lord was not in the ſtrong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the ſtill ſmall voice, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. And therefore we may ſafely conclude, that noiſe, ſelf-commendation, and applauſe, are the true characteriſtics or marks of deceivers, impoſtors, and ſuch as are under palpable deluſion; and conſequently the objection holds firm againſt this noiſy work, the kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation.

The other objection, *Pref.* page 12, 13, is taken from the Camizars. "And it is pretended, (ſays Mr. Robe,) that their caſe is the ſame with ours, and ſeeing they were under a deluſion, this muſt be a deluſion alſo. In anſwer to this he alledges, that there is the greateſt diſparity and unlikeneſs between the caſe of the Camizars and thoſe affected among us." And he endeavours to ſhow the diſparity in ſeveral inſtances, none of which will hold, tho' he has Mr. Webſter's teſtimony, *Letter*, page 33, for ſhewing accurately the great diſparity.

1ſt, He ſays, "The Camizars had their bodily agitations from a ſupernatural power. The diſtreſſes upon the bodies of our

people proceed in a natural way, from the great fear of God's wrath." I have shewn above from Mr. Edwards, that their fear of wrath arife from fenfible repreſentations of horrible objects upon their imaginations; theſe repreſentations are not natural, elſe they would be more univerſal. They cannot proceed from the Spirit of God, as I have proven before, for the Spirit deals with the ſuperior faculties of the ſoul, in a rational way, in and by the word, enlightening and informing the underſtanding, and renewing and ſwaying the will: and ſince theſe frightful repreſentations upon the imagination are not natural, and ſince they cannot be impreſſed by the Spirit of God, it remains that they muſt be impulſes of Satan, and conſequently, the fears that iſſue from them, muſt of neceſſity proceed from ſatanical influence, eſpecially when there can be no inſtance given in ſcripture, that the operations of the Spirit of God, in his convincing work, have any ſuch dreadful effects upon the bodies of men, as take place in the preſent caſe.

2d, "The Camizars pretended inſpiration, and underſtood not ſometimes what they uttered; none of our people ever pretended in the leaſt to inſpiration, they give a rational account of themſelves." In anſwer to this Mr. Edwards acknowledges that the work in New England, to which this in Scotland is exactly ſimilar, is attended with inſpiration, and tho' he allows that extraordinary gifts will ceaſe in what he calls the adult ſtate of the church, i. e. when public charity or bounteſs toleration will take place every where, yet he argues nothing againſt new inſpirations after the canon of the ſcripture is completed. Beſides it is obvious to the obſervation of all, that the people who undergo theſe bodily ſeizures, preſently turn eloquent and can talk fluently upon ſome ſcripture, tho' groſsly ignorant before of the very firſt principles of religion, and if this is not inſpiration, I know not what it is, and herein the ſimilitude to the Camizars holds, for ſo ſoon as that diabolical ſpirit ſeized them, preſently they talked in rapture.

3d, "The Camizars," ſays Mr. Robe, "continued many years under their bodily agitations, whenever their pretended inſpiration ſeized them, but our people are delivered from their bodily diſtreſſes, which do not return unto them again, when they are delivered from their fears." It would ſeem then that their fears frequently recur; for it is moſt certain, that many of them undergo theſe bodily diſtreſſes over and over again; ſo that in this inſtance the ſimilitude holds likewiſe.

4th, "Among the Camizars, their pretended inſpired teachers only were affected: among us, ſays he, only ſome of our hearers. Herein Mr. Robe miſtakes the ſtory; for there are many inſtances in the hiſtory of the French Prophets, wherein

hundreds at a time who came to their assemblies, were presently affected, and seized with bodily agitations, and they pretended to the power of the Holy Ghost, as much as Mr. Robe can do for his hearers.

Lastly, Mr. Robe says, "That the exhortations of the Camizars to repentance and amendment of life, were without any mixture of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. In ours a work of conviction is carried on to conversion, according to the doctrines of the gospel." Herein also Mr. Robe, in order to fix a disparity between his people and the Camizars, does them manifest injustice, for they pretended at least to sound doctrine, as Lacy in his Preface to the Cry from the Desart, says of them, page 13. "They all hold the truth as it is in Jesus: he is among them the foundation and corner stone. Whoever teaches a different gospel, and derogates from the honour of our Lord, let him be with us, Anathema maranatha. The two great commandments whereon hang all the law and the prophets, are urgently enforced in their extacies—and the scriptures directed to be read as the supreme rule of faith and manners." But as I shall agree with Mr. Robe, that the true gospel of of Jesus Christ was far from being mixed with the exhortations of the Camizars, so I am afraid the same charge may be laid against many of the promoters of this work, amongst us, especially if we are to judge by the printed rhapsodies of Mr. Whitfield.

Thus we have seen that there is no disparity betwixt the Camizars, and the subjects of this extraordinary work amongst us, in the above particulars mentioned by Mr. Robe. I might further shew the exact resemblance between them in several other instances. The Camizars published Narratives of the wonderful work among them, just like Mr. Robe's narrative of the extraordinary work with him; only with this difference, that Mr. Lacy is so honest as to publish the names of the persons, who were the subjects of this awful delusion, Mr. Robe thinks fit, for very good reasons, to conceal the names of these he speaks of. Mr. Lacy publishes his account in the words of the persons themselves, and accordingly there is discernible variety of style. In Robe's narrative there is an exact uniformity of style, which renders it the more suspicious. Further the Camizars took upon them to exhort at their own hand, without any lawful calling, under a delusive pretence of inspiration; and it is well known that there have been several public exhorters among the subjects of this work both at home and abroad, whose success is mightily boasted of, particularly by Mr. Webster. *Let. page* 8. "Knowing the terror of the Lord they persuade men, having tasted also that he is gracious, they com-

mend his precious grace. Their labour of love is indefatigable: their success great, insomuch that numbers, now in a promising way, date their first concern from hearing others declare what God hath done for their souls." Although this practice has been owned by all sound divines, to be a manifest stratagem of the devil, to discredit a standing ministry. Again the same bodily agitations were to be found among the Camizars, as among the people here, the same noise and ostentation, and upon all, the same pretended evidences of a work of God, and as solemn renunciation of the devil as having any share in it.

For a proof of this, let us compare the evidences, that Mr. Webster gives of divine influence as the true spring of this extraordinary work here, with the evidences which Sir Richard Buckley, and Mr. Lacy gives of the communication of the sanctifying grace of God, to the souls of the Camizars, and we will find that they exactly hit, as face answereth face in a glass. Faithful account of the French prophets, page 22. "As to the communication of the sanctifying grace of God to the souls of those who believe in, and attend upon this dispensation; it is no unreasonable request that I make (says the above Sir Richard Buckley) in desiring not to be bound down to answer for every individual person, that is outwardly a professor — There was a Judas among the twelve, and an Ananias among them who sold their estates to give to the poor. But as far as I can observe from the acquaintance of many months, it has in many produced these several effects, of meekness, patience under injuries, a contempt of the world, a dread and hatred of all sin, a love and delight in secret prayer, and entire humility to the very dust, an insatible thirst after continual attending upon the word of God in the assemblies, either praying to him, or hearing his word; an extensive charity to mankind of all sorts, and a compartment in the world agreeable thereto.—I can never have the least doubt, or suspicion, that so good and so constant operations, as the love of God, the hatred of one's self, and a voluntary separation of soul from the pleasure of this life, a full contentment in the want of human consolations, and joy in hardships (all which I have seen exemplified) could possibly proceed from an evil spirit." And says Mr. Lacy, *ibid, page* 42. "The Spirit insisting chiefly, and forcibly upon the great duties of sincere and fervent love to God and man, and drawing all parties among us to an actual union, that silences all variance about party opinions, and brings the several acts, into one bond of affection under itself, doth thereby give another instance, wherein it favours not of infernal qualities, but rather of the holy uniting Spirit, which animated the primitive Christians, and proceeds of that God

who is love itself. A Spirit exhorting its adherents to self-denial,—a spirit that takes away the occasions of pride in man, and by various ways of its operations tends to abase him thoroughly,—a spirit which gratifies not the particular corruptions and sinful infirmities of its followers; but on the contrary, puts them upon repeated performance of the opposite virtues.—And as hitherto I am assured of its good effects above mentioned, so while they continue witnessed by and felt in my own soul, I shall rather incur the displeasure of all the world than God's, by charging them on the devil." Now let us see how Mr. Webster proves that divine influence is the true spring of the extraordinary work at Cambuslang, &c. *Lett.* p. 7, 8, "You will readily ask what fruit have these things? Does their faith work by love? Yes, my friend, and that too in a remarkable manner. Their faith daily ripens into action—they esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right—the lives of the profane are visibly reformed—relative duties conscientiously discharged—the high praises of the Lord employ the tongue of blasphemers—praise is perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings—grosser sinners profess the greatest remorse for their acts of injustice—never did any converts appear endowed with more of a truly Christian spirit—their souls burn with love to God—to one another, and to all that bear the divine image. They cheerfully forgive their enemies, and wish well to their fellow creatures, Pag. 18. The devil himself were he not the father of liars would, methinks, be ashamed to call this his work, or claim the converts as his children. Pag. 24. Shall we believe the most glorious, the most substantial, the most real blessings, the product of a mere imagination, the offspring of a deluded brain! Thrice happy delusion! O my soul, may I ever be thus deceived, and ever feel the same blessed effects."

Now when these two accounts are stated and compared, where lies the difference? The evidence of a divine influence is as strong for the Camizars as for the subjects of this extraordinary work in the west of Scotland. The pretended effects are the same. For my part I can see no difference but this, that Mr. Webster's account is more theatrical, and consequently has more of fiction or invention, than the plain and simple account of the two gentlemen above-mentioned; and therefore since it is owned by all, that the Camizars, notwithstanding of all their pretended evidences of a divine influence, were under a manifest delusion, it follows that the people here, for whom no better evidence can be produced, must be under the same, till it please the Lord to give them a discovery of their mistake, which I hope and wish he will do in his own time.

I shall now consider the principles of the promoters of this work, especially with respect to boundless toleration, and liberty of conscience. It has been constantly observed, that the ringleaders of enthusiasm have strenuously set up for a boundless liberty to all sects and opinions, especially such as relate to different modes of government and policy in the church of God. The reason is obvious, for the government established by Christ in his house, is the best, yea the only fence against the diverse and strange doctrines that may happen to be advanced and propagated to the prejudice of the truth as it is in Jesus; and therefore the strong batteries of hell have been always planted against the walls and bulwarks of Zion, because if a breach is once made on these, error and delusion, and all manner of abomination, have easy access into the city of God. And accordingly we find that the testimony and sufferings of the church of Scotland, ever since the reformation, have been chiefly stated upon the defence of that purity of Presbyterial church government and discipline, which we happily attained unto, in opposition to a lordly prelacy upon the one hand, and sectarian anarchy or confusion on the other.

When matters were come to that pass in the church of Scotland of late years, that pleading with the judicature by instructions, petitions, and representations, were not only utterly disregarded, but some of the now seceding ministers ejected, for no other reason, but because they could not withdraw a protestation entered before the General Assembly, 1733, for their just rights and privileges as ministers of the gospel, to testify doctrinally and judicially against the defections of the times; there were some ministers about that time, who appeared somewhat zealous against the arbitrary measures that were then entered into. Several of them had in the year 1732, subscribed a representation, wherein the now seceding ministers joined, and presented unto the Assembly the same year, for the redress of many of the steps of defection, which are afterwards mentioned in the Act and Testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery; which representation was refused a hearing by that Assembly; whereupon such of the subscribing ministers as were present, offered a protestation for their exoneration, which was also refused to be marked. The zeal that appeared in these ministers at that time, made the brethren entertain such a favourable opinion of them, that when their secession was first stated, Nov. 1733, they declared their readiness to hold communion with all such who were adhering "to the principles of the true Presbyterian covenanted church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and who were affected with the evils complained of, and were wrestling against the same."

And afterwards in their declinature given to the Assembly 1739, they "entreat and beseech such ministers and elders who regard the covenanted testimony of the church of Scotland, that for the love they bear to the honour and glory of the Redeemer and his despised truths, as also that hey may be in a capacity, to transmit a faithful testimony to succeeding generations, to come out from the present judicatories, and from all ministerial communion with them, as they would not be partakers of their sins.—That they would make use of the keys of government and discipline for the ends and purposes for which they are given them, and that they would put too their hands to lift up the standard of a judicial testimony for the borne down truths of God."

But instead of all this, when the seceding ministers observed that these very brethren, who once appeared to contend with them, for the very same steps of reformation, went in by degrees into the measures of the times, that their former zeal not only abated, but they justified or extenuated these steps of defection they complained of before; that they were so far from testifying doctrinally and judicially against the same, that a profound silence took place anent these matters, and scarce any other grievance publicly lamented among them, but that there were a secession from the present judicatures, and a standing testimony against their defections and proceedings. The brethren, I say, observing all this, and finding that these ministers were peaceably incorporated with intruders, and such as have been active in carrying on a course of defection, by tolerating the erroneous, supporting and countenancing errors, and by enacting laws and constitutions contrary to the laws of Zion's King, whereby ministerial freedom is suppressed, new and unwarrantable terms of ministerial and christian communion imposed, and whereby the heritage of God is oppressed and broken, and likewise with such as have subordinated themselves unto the civil powers in their ecclesiastical meetings, functions and administrations, and practically given up with their holding of the King of Zion, by reading in one shape or other the Act of Parliament anent Capt. John Porteous; this being the case, that they were all silently incorporated as above, the seceding ministers could not with a safe conscience hold communion with them any longer; which by the by, is a sufficient answer to what Mr. Webster is pleased to suggest to the consideration of the Associate Presbytery, *Lett.* p. 13, anent their refusing to hold communion with these ministers whom they once looked upon as a contending party.

Some of them I know were well enough satisfied with the secession at first, and would have been so to this day, though

they were not for running any hazard themſelves, by joining therein, providing the ſeceding Miniſters could have chicaned and diſſembled ſo far, as to ſupport their popularity, by joining with them, and encouraging the people to cleave to them, while in the mean time they were reſolved to ſcreen themſelves from the ſtorm, and indolently wait for better days. When they were thus diſappointed, and being reſolved not to run the riſque of church cenſures, by joining in the preſent teſtimony, and finding a good number of ſolid and experienced Chriſtians through the land deſerting their miniſtry, they at length fall upon this ſtratagem, viz. That the ſeveral points of the preſent teſtimony, are not among the fundamentals or eſſentials of chriſtianity; that they are ſuch as great and good men have differed about, and therefore people ought not to forſake the miniſtry of good men, although they cannot come the length of eſpouſing the teſtimony the brethren are contending for. There are good men of all opinions, and therefore the brethren's teſtimony, and their refuſing to join with good men of all denominations, is nothing but bigotry and party zeal.

In order to propagate this principle, (which is thought to be the beſt mean to break the ſeceſſion,) Mr. George Whitefield is fallen upon as the moſt proper tool, and he, finding that it would promote his ſecular intereſt, which now appears in the eyes of all ſober thinking men, to be his proper aim, greedily embraces the opportunity; for as I ſhall preſently ſhew, the Aſſociate Preſbytery did not invite him to Scotland. However when it was found that the bait was like to take, his miniſtrations and ſucceſs are mightily cried up, his doctrine and art imitated, as far as ſome miniſters could, till at length the ſame fatal deluſion took place here, which has overſpread a great part of our American Colonies; and then preſently the cry is raiſed, That God is now remarkably owning the miniſters of the eſtabliſhed church, notwithſtanding all the evils complained of; he is crowning their miniſtrations with remarkable ſucceſs, nations are born in one day by their means; there is no ſuch countenance given to the Aſſemblies of the Seceders; and therefore the conſequence is, the people ought to diſown them, whom God is diſowning. God is now teſtifying that there was no ground for ſeceding from the eſtabliſhed church, when he is holding fellowſhip with her in ſuch a viſible and open manner.

This argument was mightily improven, and no doubt had influence upon ſome of the ſimple and unwary; although it is no breach of charity to ſay, that the miniſters who reaſoned at this rate, were either under the power of a blind infatuation at the time, or were groſsly impoſing upon the people, when it was obvious to the obſervation of all, that they were going on in the

same course of backsliding from the Lord as formerly, and the people that were misled, filled with the greatest prejudice and aversion to any testimony for the reformation principles of this church. But as breaking the secession was the grand plot, to an orderthereto we find the above vain-glorious boasting running through all their public papers. Says Mr. Robe to the Associate Presbytery, Pref. page 18. "Can you be unaffected with the glory "of infinitely sovereign grace, appearing towards a judgment-"deserving generation, as to say, you do well to fret and be angry, because you find your glory lessened by it, and your credit beginning to suffer." To the same purpose, Mr. Webster speaking likewise of the Seceding ministers, Lett. p. 14. "What "then, if God is now testifying his displeasure, by not crowning their own labours with the wished success? Or may he not "even in pity to them, remarkably countenance the ministry of "some they despised, that they may henceforth learn not so "rashly to call these God has sanctified, common and unclean?" And p. 45. "It may teach the Associate Presbytery not to limit "the holy One of Israel in the dispensation of his grace, and "that God hath yet made choice of our Zion, and delights to "dwell within the gates of our Jerusalem. And should make "them more cautious in separating from those whom the great "Master of assemblies condescends to countenance so remarkably with his presence." This is plain dealing; but now is a discovery of the whole secret. This work must be cried up as an undeniable evidence of God's dwelling within the gates of the established church, and countenancing them remarkably with his presence; and this as the last shift, must be improven to the best advantage to bear down the secession. But as the Lord in his great mercy, hath by this time made it evident to the whole kingdom, that these prophets hath seen a lying divination, so need say the less upon it; only I cannot miss to observe, that they have taken the most effectual way to perpetuate the lamentable effects of this delusion. For in order to secure the people in all time coming from joining the Seceders, or ever appearing zealous for Presbyterian church government, all pains are taken to persuade them, that a testimony for the same is nothing but mere bigotry; that they may be good people whatever denomination they are of, and therefore they ought not to be taken up with these lesser things, but only about the vitals of religion, wherein the matters of church government hath no concern. It is plain that this doctrine opens a wide door for boundless toleration, and liberty of conscience; yet that this is the leading principle of the promoters of this work both abroad and at home, shall be shewn by their own writings.

I suppose it cannot be reasonably refused, that Mr. Whitefield is the chief human instrument and promoter of this work;

and indeed by his fascinating art he has gained considerably by it. I might therefore begin with considering his catholic scheme of universal love and communion of all churches, which is built upon this false principle, that there is no foundation in scripture or reason for any particular form of church government by another. But the pernicious tendency of this scheme, for unhinging all true religion in the world, and advancing Satan's kingdom and interest therein, has been detected to much excellent purpose, from Mr. Whitfield's own writings, by the rev. Mr. Gib, that I need only refer the reader to the appendix of his Warning, where he will find full satisfaction upon this subject.

I proceed therefore to shew, that all the subordinate promoters of this work, embrace and propagate the same principle with their famous leader Mr. Whitefield. We may easily judge of the principles maintaining by Mr. Gilbert Tennent, and other adherents of Mr. Whitefield of the presbyterian denomination in New England, from the above mentioned Protestation presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, where it is said, page 9. "That they expressly deny that Presbyteries and Synods have authority, or "should go any farther in judging of appeals or references, &c. "than to give their best advice. Which, say the protesting ministers, is plainly to divest the officers and judicatures of Christ's "kingdom of all authority, and plainly contradicts our Confession of Faith, chap. 31 § 3."

That Mr. Gilbert Tennent in particular is entirely moulded into Mr. Whitefield's catholic scheme of blending all religious societies into one, to make up a synagogue of Satan out of all, will appear from Whitefield's character of him, Remarks, &c. p. 8. "I have the happiness of being personally and very intimately acquainted with Mr. Tennent. I scarce know a man of a "more catholic spirit." Mr. Whitefield shews, Rem. page 24. how far Messrs. Prince, Webb and Cowper, three Boston ministers, are from bigotry in their preface to Mr. Gregere's sermon, which concludes thus: "And our earnest wishes, that with a "tender and meek forbearance of each other in different sentiments about church order, and government, we may all unite "in maintaining and promoting these more excellent and momentous points of grace and vital piety." That Mr. Edwards is the same principle may be seen from the close of his sermon on the marks of a work of a true Spirit. Mr. Harris speaks without disguise, Weekly Hist. No. 14. "Since we cannot come to "understand some texts about church government, and about "the time or mode of baptism, and some other little externals, "that are soon to perish, all ministers of every persuasion, should, "lend their pulpits to each other alternately, never touching on "those things they cannot see alike." This was exactly the dialect of the formalists and other enthusiasts of the last century.

Now as the work is owned to be the same abroad and at home

ſo we find the promoters thereof in Scotland all ſpeaking in the ſame ſtrain, and propagating the ſame lax and anarchical principles with their brethren above mentioned. The Rev. Mr. Williſon at Dundee, in the poſtſcript of his letter, Weekly Hiſt. No. 19. "Many with us are for preferring miniſters according "to the party they are of." That is, there are many found Preſbyterians in Scotland who prefer a Preſbyterian miniſter, to thoſe of the Epiſcopal or other denominations, and among the Preſbyterians in name they prefer thoſe who hold ſtrictly to their principles. "But commend me (ſays he) to a pious, Chriſt "exalting, and ſoul winning miniſter, whatever be his denom- "ination." That is, ſuppoſe a man were a Jeſuit, and has the outward appearance of ſanctity, and if any ſucceſs attend his miniſtrations upon the external morals of the people, he is equally acceptable to Mr. Williſon with thoſe of his own denomination. How the Rev. Mr. Williſon will be capable to reconcile this principle, with his cleaving to our covenants, national and ſolemn league, which he profeſſes to do in that letter, I know not, I am afraid that ſuch a profeſſion will be looked upon by the impartial, to be mere artifice.

The Rev. Mr. Ogelvie at Aberdeen, another promoter of this work, is far from diſſembling his keeneſs for toleration principles. Weekly Hiſt. No. 28. "We have been of late much em- "ployed, and a great noiſe has been made about the leſſer mat- "ters of the law, and are now much broken in judgment about "things many of which I muſt own, I do not well underſtand." The leſſer matters of the law, which Mr. Ogelvie ſays he does not well underſtand, are theſe little externals of church government, which his friend Mr. Howel Harris abovementioned profeſſes to be very indifferent about. That this is Mr. Ogelvie's plain meaning, appears from his character of Mr. Whitefield: "His attachment to no party but Chriſt, and true grace alone, "has long appeared to me a peculiar excellency in him." No party but Chriſt! I tremble at the blaſphemy of dreſſing up the the Lord of glory in the monſtrous garb of Mr. Whitefield's ſcheme; and therefore I dare not uſe the freedom of putting that bold expreſſion in plainer language; however it is obvious by that other expreſſion, true grace alone, that the truth relative to the government and order of the houſe of God, are with Mr. Ogelvie matters of mere indifference; and therefore according to him, not worth the contending for, becauſe no way eſſential to ſalvation. I am glad to find that the abſurdity of this dangerous doctrine has been expoſed, and an open teſtimony given againſt it, by the Rev. Mr. John Beſſet, miniſter of the goſpel at Aberdeen, in a ſermon of his lately printed there, wherein he ſolidly refutes that doctrine which is now ſo current, of ranking any of the truth's of Chriſt among indifferentie

and gives a plain and juſt character of Mr. Whitefield, which deſerves the attention of the public, p. 67. "Terrible it is to "me, ſays he, to bring in any of the things of Chriſt into the "claſs of indifferencies, by which it muſt come to this ſome-"times to lay aſide Chriſt's commandments, for no better rea-"ſon, than becauſe the thing required, is not eſſential to ſalva-"tion; or to this ſometimes to prefer a human device to a "commandment of Chriſt; for if both be in the claſs of in-"differences, it is at your diſcretion, which of them you chooſe "or refuſe at this or that time. How dangerous this is I muſt "ſhew at large; but though I or an angel from heaven, ſhould "teach you any other doctrine, (namely the doctrine of indiffer-"encies) we corrupt the doctrine of Chriſt. I will anſwer for "this I preach, as being Chriſt's truth, in the day that you and "I ſhall ſtand naked at his tribunal, and I will anſwer for it "as neceſſary and ſeaſonable truth, whoever of a miniſter of Sa-"tan, transforming himſelf into a miniſter of Chriſt, may of "late have poiſoned many of this deluded land with the contra-"ry. How appoſitely may I repeat here part of a letter from "the great Mr. Rutherford to the profeſſors in Ireland. It is "not poſſible, ſays he, to compound a matter betwixt Chriſt "and Antichriſt. It was man's wit and the wit of Prelates, and "their god-father the Pope, to put Chriſt and his prerogative-"royal and truths, and the ſmalleſt nail breadth of his latter "will, in the new callender of indifferencies, and to make a blank "of uninked paper in Chriſt's Teſtament, that men fill up, and "ſo ſhuffle the truth, and matters they called indifferent through "other, and ſpin both together, that Antichriſt's wares may ſell "the better." From which the Rev. Mr. Biſſet ſubſumes, "What would this great Seer have ſaid to thoſe of our day, "who liſten to every ſtrolling impoſter and cheat (meaning Mr. "Whitfield) who would card Chriſt's truth, and their own er-"rors through other, that Antichriſt's wares may ſell the bet-"ter." I hope the reader will be well pleaſed with this quo-tation, that he will not grudge the length of it.

I believe none will ſuſpect, that the Rev. Meſſrs. Role and Webſter, who are ſuch zealous promoters of this work, will be behind any of the former in declaring for the anarchical ſcheme, or a boundleſs liberty of conſcience with reſpect to the princi-ples of church government. Any who have read Mr. Webſter's letter may obſerve how contemptuouſly he ſpeaks of the govern-ment and diſcipline of the houſe of the houſe of God, page 30. "A perſon under alarming apprehenſions of divine wrath, can-"not with much ſedateneſs of mind peruſe the endleſs volumes "that have been wrote on viſible external forms. What would "you think of his convictions for ſin, who made church gov-"ernment his firſt inquiry? Would he not be as reaſonably

"and profitably employed in reading Mr. Guthrie's Tryal, &c. "as studying public acts and testimonies." Now granting that the doctrine concerning the government of the church, doth not fall under the inquiry of a person under conviction, at the first instance; yet I am perfectly sure, that the Spirit of God, in his convincing work, doth not beget in any soul, an aversion to public acts and testimonies for the declarative glory of God, as evidently takes place in Mr. Webster himself, and those he is pleading for; what can he mean by the endless volumes that have been writ on visible external forms; but that Presbyterian church government has been mightily controverted and opposed, therefore it is worth no man's while to take up his head about it! And accordingly he gives two insulting challenges from Mr. Robe's preface, with equal warmth to the Seceding ministers. 1. "Dare any of you tell the most zealous for "your testimony, and against their own ministers, that these "things are marks, and evidences of saving grace." Not to insist upon the invective of calling it our testimony; I dare tell every one, that a zealous concern for a public testimony to the kingly office of Christ, and the privileges of his kingdom, is among the distinguishing evidences of saving grace, which we find all the saints in scripture had, every one of them being zealous for the testimony of their day. 2. "Dare any of you tell "them that the judging your testimony irregular, and their "close conjunction with their own ministers are certain eviden- "ces that they are Christless and graceless who do so?" To which I answer, that if some persons had no better evidence of their being in a state of grace, then their judging the testimony, we were honoured to give to be irregular, and their close conjunction with their own ministers who are carrying on a course of defection; it would be no great breach of charity to say, that they are Christless and graceless who do so.

As for the Rev. Mr. Robe; he insists upon making the charges good, of his being of the above principles; and I find no difficulty in doing it: for, 1st. He plainly insinuates, that the decay of practical godliness, formality in religion, and open immorality, are the only breaches of covenant, Pref. page 4. His words after mentioning the above evils, are, "All this was ob- "versed by some, and looked upon as the cause of God's con- "troversy with us, and what they feared would provoke him "to send some desolating judgment to avenge the quarrel of his "thus broken covenant." Now, if by covenant he mean the covenant of duties, which this land once and again entered into, both in our national and solemn league and covenant, it is plain, that he looks upon all defections from Presbyterial principles in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, to be no breaches of these covenants. This will appear if it is so considered.

2*d*, That he makes it one of Satan's devices for people to be exercised about public defection, which, says he, "either are not their sins, or among the least of them." But we find that, for the public sins of magistrates and ministers acting in their several capacities, wrath has been poured out upon the whole land, Micai iii. 11, 12. "The heads thereof "judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets "thereof divine for money, yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is "not the Lord among us? No evil can come upon us. Therefore shall "Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become "heaps." And when people do not lament these public sins, they are "chargeable upon them. "All these things shall come upon this genera-"tion saith the Lord," Mat. xxiii. 36.

3*d*, He makes mismanagement in government and discipline to be no causes, or at least very inconsiderable ones, of the Lord's controversy with us; for he finds great fault with these, who complained of public defections and backslidings as the most crying sins, and alledges, "Here-"by they were led to overlook what was the greatest evil, and cause of "God's controversy with us, namely, the corruptions of the lives of the "members of this church." But I could wish Mr. Robe would remember, that the corruptions of the lives of church members flows chiefly, next to the depravation of their natures, from the corruptions of the ministry, Jer. xxiii. 14, 15. "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusa-"lem an horrible thing, they walk in lies, they strengthen also the hands "of evil doers. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, concerning the "prophets, Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them "drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is pro-"fanenes gone forth into all the land." Verse 22. "But if they had "stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then "they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil "of their doings."

4*th*, Mr. Robe is pleased to call the defections of ministers and church judicatories, "disputable things, far from the vitals of religion," Prof. page 5. The speaking so diminutively of our public defections and matters relative to the government of the house of Christ, necessarily lands in scepticism, which is the native fruit of enthusiasm. Besides he goes upon a palpable mistake which I am afraid many inculcate upon their hearers, namely, that none who are taken up about the vitals of religion, will much concern themselves about the public cause of God; the very reverse of which is true.

Thus I have shewn that Mr. Robe is not a whit behind any of the above promoters of this work, in favouring and countenancing a boundless liberty of conscience, especially with respect to church government; and therefore since the charge is made good against him, I hope he will not henceforth reckon the Associate Presbytery slanderers, as he threatened to do, if they failed in their probation of this point. I find the attesters of the narrative of the extraordinary work at Cambuslang, speaking much in the same strain, commending the people there as free of bigotry and party zeal, and as having an "aversion to things that tend to strife, rather "than to edification." That is, an aversion to all testimonies for our Presbyterian church government and constitution. I cannot here omit a strange character that one of them gives the people at Cambuslang: Short Narrative, page 17. "All of them, says he, expressed the warmest "desires after an interest in Christ, to obtain which they said they would "cheerfully lay down their lives." Now unless he make them all of the purgatorial or middle state scheme, I freely own I know not what he means by the expression.

I come now in the last place to consider Mr. Robe's address to the Associate Presbytery. It is plain that such public addresses are not designed for the conviction or edification of the party to whom they are made, but to expose them as far as possible to the ridicule of the world; and therefore I cannot allow myself to address the reverend Mr. Robe in the same manner, especially when his address is written with so much of a spirit of bitterness, that it would rather tend to irritate than reclaim, should I endeavour to imitate it. There is so little of solid reason, and of the persuasive, and so much of the invective in it, that I had not thought it worth my while to have given any return, were it not that I perceive the world is grosly imposed upon, by several false insinuations that are made therein.

1st, He represents us to the world as men of bitter and malignant spirit, and himself and his brethren as men of the greatest patience and moderation. "Preface, page 15. "Whatever bitter names you and your party give us, whatever bitter reproaches you lay upon us, we take all patiently. We would lay our bodies on the ground, and as the street for you to go over, if it could in the least contribute to remove your prejudices." The giving of bitter names, or casting groundless reproaches on any, we absolutely refuse. If our testifying against the corrupt practises of ministers and judicatories, and lamenting the same be reckoned a giving of bitter names, we cannot help it! But how far they have taken all patiently, when they have proceeded against us the length of deposition and ejection, let the world judge. Have they laid their bodies as the ground for us to go over, when they have not only thrust us from our charges, but have painted us out to the world as the sole disturbers of human society, who scarce deserve the common privileges of other subjects.

The thing I find that angers Mr. Robe and his party, is the late act of the Associate Presbytery anent a public fast. This, says he, is "the most heaven-daring paper that hath been published by any set of men to maintain these hundred years past." Strange! Is it more heinous than the papers published by Deists, Arians, Quakers, and other blasphemers, that have been in Britain within less than an hundred years bygone? The reason of the charge is, "Therein you declare the work of God to be a delusion, and the work of the grand Deceiver." Had it had done so, it had been an iniquity to be punished by the judge; but we never looked upon this to be the work of God, so I have already disproved the evidences they alledge for its being so, and therefore it must remain to be a delusion still, till better evidences are adduced.

Mr. Robe alledges that we are not duly informed anent the particular circumstances of this work, because none of us have been at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, &c. Had there appeared the least probability to us, of a religious and remarkable work of God begun in these places, we should have been the cheerful witnesses, and rejoiced to have been plentiful sharers of it among the first. But when we plainly saw, that the instruments and promoters thereof were so far from essaying any thing like reformation, that their utmost endeavours were employed to sopite and banish any remaining inclinations of the people that way: when we were convinced that, though the extraordinary appearances that attended this work, such as bodily agonies and extatic impulses, were conformable to Mr. Whitefield's experience; yet contrary to the experiences of all the saints recorded in scripture, and no way agreeable to the method of the Spirit's operation as revealed there: When we had unquestionable proofs of the prejudice and enmity, with which the subjects of this work and the agents

bers thereof, were filled againſt our covenanted reformation, and all that eſpouſed the ſame, to an higher degree than ever was known in Scotland ſince our perſecuting times: When we obſerved the great noiſe and outward ſhew that was made of this work, the public proclamation of it through all quarters of the world, and the vaſt oſtentation and great ſwelling words wherewith this was publiſhed, ſo unlike the modeſty and humility of true chriſtians: When it was obvious that the promoters of this work in Scotland, were not only embracing and propagating anarchical and toleration principles, but practically owning them, by joining in full communion with Mr. Whitefield, a profeſſed prieſt of the church of England; and, after all, lulling poor people faſt aſleep under the tokens of the Lord's anger, with the fatal allurement of a great work of God begun among them, as an undeniable proof of the Lord's preſence with their miniſters, notwithſtanding of all that the Seceders have ſaid againſt them: In a word, when it was perfectly evident that the whole work was managed and carried on, for bearing down any teſtimony for Scotland's covenanted reformation; when all this was abundantly clear to the Seceding miniſters, would Mr. Robe have them to come and ſee, eſpecially when joining in miniſterial communion, was a neceſſary preliminary to any ſatisfaction that might be expected? Or in caſe they had been in any doubt, to what purpoſe to come and ſeek information from theſe miniſters, who had before hand given it out in the ſtrongeſt terms, to be an extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, a prelude to the glorious things promiſed to the church in the laſt times? It is plain in this caſe, the Seceding miniſters behoved to give implicit faith to the whole, or be accounted blaſphemers, as Mr. Robe calls them, Preface, page 16 and is ſo modeſt as to ſay that they are come too near to the unpardonable ſin. However, ſince we were not in the leaſt doubt about the nature and tendency of this work, I would aſk Mr. Robe, if it would not have been as much our duty, to go to a Quaker meeting to be informed whether they are agitated with the true Spirit, or by a Satanical impulſe, ſince it is notour that their pretences to a divine influence run as high as others?

Mr. Robe is pleaſed to adorn his addreſs with a very idle ſtory, which plainly diſcovers with what manner of ſpirit he writes. Preface, p. 16. "One of your party who had conſulted one of your number, ſaid, that "if he thought the Spirit of God would come by the miniſters of this "church, he would not own it." This is a very calumnious inſinuation, as if one of our members had given it as his opinion, that if he thought that the Spirit of God would come by the miniſters of this church, he would not own it. I can freely ſay for every one of our number, that we would gladly rejoice to ſee the Spirit of God poured out upon the miniſters of this church, reforming and reclaiming them, in which caſe we would be of one heart and one way. I would not have given the reader any trouble about this ſtory, if it were not to let the world ſee upon what foundation they build the aſperſions they caſt ſo liberally upon the Seceders. The plain matter of fact was this: One George Findlay, a Seceder in the pariſh of Kelſyth, having one of his friends ſeized with this work, acquainted the rev. Mr. Erſkine at Sterling therewith; but no ſuch thing paſſed betwixt them as is above repreſented, nor any thing ſaid by Mr. Erſkine that could lay the leaſt foundation for ſuch an unguarded ſpeech. But the ſaid George Findlay, happening to have an interview with one Alexander Allen, who was once among the Seceders of that pariſh, but returning to Mr. Robe, is now accounted by him, to be the only man of any conſideration as to ſerious religion that was among them; this man ſaid to Findlay, "You think this work a plain deluſion, for if you thought "it was the Spirit of the Lord, you would go and countenance it."

Upon which George Findlay replied, "Although that I was perſuaded "from the word of God, that it were the ſaving work of the Spirit of God, "I do not ſee my warrant from the word, to bury a teſtimony for truth, "and return to the eſtabliſhment as yet; for if it be the work of God's "Spirit, I am in no doubt but the Aſſociate Preſbytery and the Eſtabliſh-"ment will meet, for it is the Lord's work the Aſſociate Preſbytery is "contending for, and will be made to own." Now will this bear ſuch a gloſs as Mr. Robe puts on it? Or will it follow, becauſe Findlay was once in company with the reverend Mr. Erſkine, that he adviſed him to ſay as Mr. Robe relates? And if Allan has told Mr. Robe the ſtory as he prints it, I muſt ſay it is no great evidence that he is of ſuch conſideration for ſerious religion, as Mr Robe repreſents.

But I find it is faſhionable with the party to receive and hand about reports of the Seceders, however falſe and ridiculous: one inſtance of many ſhall ſuffice: There are hundreds of Mr. Robe's party, who I doubt not have conſulted with more than one of his number, who ſaid that one of Mr. Fither's elders came to him with his daughter under ſome ſpiritual diſorder, and he having converſed with her gave it as his opinion to her father, that it was a work of God upon her ſoul; but being told that it was at Cambuſlang ſhe was touched, he ſaid, if that was the caſe, it muſt certainly be a deluſion: This ſtory is no doubt deſigned, to repreſent Mr. Fither in the blackeſt colours, and accordingly they have printed it in one of their anonymous pamphlets, as what they have certain information of, and continue to hand it about with the greateſt confidence. But I hereby aſſure the world that it is entirely falſe, and that there was never any foundation for it

Mr Robe, in finding fault with the act of Preſbytery for mentioning viſions, voices, and revelations among the uſual ſymptoms of a deluſive ſpirit, ſays, page 16 "None of our people, who are come to relief by "faith in Chriſt, pretend to them." There is too much of deceit here; for the queſtion is not whether they who come to relief by faith in Chriſt pretend to them; but whether they who are the ſubjects of this work who have undergone bodily pains and convulſions do not likewiſe pretend to viſions, voices, and revelations? It is moſt certain that many of them do, as can be proved by unnumerable witneſſes, who have heard them own ſo much; and Mr. Edwards is ſo ingenuous as to acknowledge that they appertain to the extraordinary work, and vindicate them as flowing from the Spirit of God, though indirectly, Diſt. Marks, page 27, 28. Mr. Robe adds, "Can you ſay that ſound divines maintain that bodily diſtreſſes are "inconſiſtent with a ſaving work of the Spirit of God? if you had ſaid "thus, and proven it, you would have ſaid ſomething; but this is what "you could not, what you durſt not."

I could wiſh the rev. Mr. Robe would for the future learn to ſpeak ſomewhat more diſcreetly. I have already ſhewn from Mr. Edwards that the riſe of theſe bodily agitations and agonies, is not only antiſcriptural, but diabolical, and therefore every ſound divine muſt maintain in theſe circumſtances, that they are inconſiſtent with a ſaving work of the Spirit of God at the time; though I do not refuſe, that ſome ſuch perſons may afterwards be the ſubjects of the Spirit's gracious operations.

There are a great many other hard ſpeeches, and bitter invectives againſt the Aſſociate Preſbytery in Mr. Robe's addreſs, which I entirely paſs, and forgive. And as I have already conſidered all that he ſays againſt the act of Preſbytery, in vindication of his extraordinary work, ſo I ſhall have done with him, after I have taken notice of what he ſays anent Mr Whitefield, and vindicate the act of Preſbytery in what is therein ſo juſtly alledged againſt that perſon.

Mr. Robe says, Preface, page 20. "I do not meddle at this time with "that part of your paper concerning the rev. Mr. George Whitefield, "whom I love in the truth. Only I am of opinion, that he should do "justice so far to himself, and the ministers of the church of Scotland, as "to set what passed betwixt you and him in a just light." Whatever justice Mr. Whitefield thinks he has done to himself, and the ministers of the church of Scotland, yet I will make it appear, that he has imposed intolerably upon the world in the letter he has published, *Weekly History*, *No.* 37. in answer to that part of the act of Presbytery relative to him; "As to what they say about the supremacy, says he, my sentiments as "to the power and authority of the civil magistrates, as to sacred things, "agree with what is said in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. "23 and 34. And I own the Lord Jesus to be the blessed Head, and "King of his church. The Solemn League and Covenant I never abjur-"ed, neither was it ever proposed to me to be abjured." That every body may see with their own eyes what Mr. Whitefield's conduct has been, which he here so Jesuitically dissembles, I shall transcribe what follows from the form and manner of making, ordering, and consecrating bishops and priests, and deacons of the church of England: "Before the gospel, "the bishop, sitting in his chair, shall cause the oath of the king's supre-"macy be ministered unto every one of the deacons that are to be order-"ed, or ordained, the tenor whereof follows: "I —— do utterly testify "and declare in my conscience, that the king's highness is the only su-"preme governor of this realm, and of all other his highness' dominions, "and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, "as temporal. And do promise that to my power I shall assist and defend "all jurisdictions, privileges, preeminencies, and authorities granted, "or belonging to the king's highness, or annexed to the imperial crown "of this realm: So help me God, and the contents of this book."— The said oath is repeated again when they are ordained priests; and the following question, among others, put to them: "Will you reverendly "obey your ordinary, and other chief ministers unto whom is committed "the charge and government over you? Answer, I will do so, the Lord "being my helper."

Now, when Mr. Whitfield was sworn once and again, that the King is supreme governor in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, and that this is one of the privileges, and preeminencies of the crown, and never has professed the least sorrow for so doing, with what face can he say, that he agrees with the above passage of the Confession of Faith, wherein it is expressly asserted, "The civil magistrate may not assume "to himself the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." And consequently it is impossible he can own the Lord Jesus to be the Head of his church, in a consistency with the above oath without manifest equivocation. As for his saying that it was never proposed to him to abjure the solemn League and Covenant, this is also a mere blind; for had it been formally proposed to him, he will not refuse that he had freedom to do it. But he could not but know, that by the act of uniformity, the Solemn League and Covenant was appointed to be abjured by all ecclesiastical persons in England for the space of twenty years from 1662 to 1682, and held to be abjured to this day; in testimony whereof the said act for uniformity is ordinarily prefixed to the several editions of the common prayer. Besides Mr. Whitefield has effectually abjured the Solemn League and Covenant, by swearing the above oath of supremacy, and engaging at his ordination to be subject to the hierarchy of the church of England, in direct opposition to the express terms of the Solemn League.

Mr. Whitefield alledges, that if his miſſives to the members of the Aſſociate Preſbytery were printed, the world would ſee, they had no reaſon to expect that he would act in any other manner than he has done. I ſhall be ſatisfied how ſoon theſe miſſives on both ſides be printed: From them it will appear, that the Aſſociate Preſbytery, were ſo far from inviting Mr. Whitefield to Scotland, that when he notified his deſign of coming to this kingdom, they plainly ſignified to him, that unleſs he embraced the reformation principles of this church, it would not be for the edification of the body of Chriſt, and accordingly wrote him at large an account of our Preſbyterian principles. He, upon the other hand, ſignified, that he was willing to ſit at the feet of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, and learn the way of Chriſt more fully, and that he was perhaps more of our mind than we knew; and a great many other ſmooth and decoying ſpeeches to that purpoſe, which made ſome of the brethren at that time imagine, that he would at leaſt lie open to light anent embracing preſbyterian principles. But they found it quite otherwiſe when he came; for in the conference which ſome members of the Preſbytery had with him at Dunfermline, Auguſt 5th, 1741, he would not ſo much as hearken to reaſoning upon the head of preſbyterian church government.

Mr. Whitefield is not ſo ingenuous as to give an account of this conference; he only ſums it up in the ſame calumnious inſinuation with Mr. Robe, that the Aſſociate Preſbytery would have been glad of his help, and to have received him into communion with them as a miniſter of Chriſt, without any other terms, but his promiſing to preach only at their invitation, or the invitation of the people. Now, by the copy of the conference written by the brethren there preſent, juſt now before me, it appears, that they were ſo far from being glad of his help, upon no other terms than his preaching at their invitation, that the firſt ſubject of converſation propoſed by them, was anent the government of the church, that they might know whether he was lying open to light upon that point or not, before they could entertain thoughts of hearing or employing him. He wanted to ſhift this converſation entirely, and to talk about toleration principles. When the brethren urged, by ſeveral arguments, a converſation upon the former ſubject in the firſt place, then he told them plainly, that he had no difficulty about it, that he was of the communion of the church of England, and was reſolved to continue ſo till they thruſt him out. Whereupon the queſtion was ſtated, Whether in theſe circumſtances, when Mr. Whitefield declared himſelf of the communion of the church of England, and his reſolution to continue in it, and refuſing to lie open to light on that head, the brethren could hold miniſterial communion with him? After one of the members had at great length, this ſtate of the queſtion, ſhewn the oppoſition both of Epiſcopacy and Independency to the word of God, and the ſolemn oath of the three nations, and Mr. Whitefield after all utterly averſe to receive light upon that ſubject, the brethren thereupon reſolved, that they would not hear him preach, nor employ him. This is only a ſhort account of a plain matter of fact. The converſation at large, if needful, ſhall be expoſed to public view.

Quædam deſunt.

FINIS.

SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES.

A

REV. THOMAS ALLISON, minister of the Gospel at Mount Hope, Washington Co. Penn.
Rev. John Anderson, Minister of the gospel, at Harman Creek, near Pittsburg
James Abercrombie, Wa. Co. Pen.
John Anderson, do
James Anderson, do
Archibald Adams, Westmoreland County, Penn.
Ebenezer Archer, Brook Co. Vir.
Samuel Archer, sen. do
John Austin, Philad.
James Anderson, York Co. Penn.
Robert Anderson, do
Elizabeth Alison, do
Major Wm. Alexander, Carlisle
William Alexander, Great Cove, Bedford Co.
Thomas Atcheson, Wash. Penn.
Robert Anderson, New York
David Archibald, Rockbridge Co. Virginia
James Arther, Nottingham, Washington County, Penn.
John Alexander, Alleghany Co.
James Alexander, do
James Anderson, Ohio Co. Vir.
George Anderson, Chartiers, Washington County, Penn.
James Arther, Peters Creek, do
Matthew R. Atkinson, Racoon, do
Abraham Anderson, Miller's Run, Washington County, Penn.
John Allen, do
Thomas Adams, Chartiers, do
Joshua Anderson, do
John Aitken, Pittsburgh
Alexander Allan, Cabarrás County, North Carolina
Alexander Allan, do
Anthony Addy, New York
James Anderson, Shippensb. Penn.
John Atchison, Robs Run, Wash. County, Penn.
John Andrews, Miller's Run, do
Robert Acklson, Buffaloe, do
John Akon, do
Alexander Little, Cross Creek
James Allison, Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Washington County, Penn.
Andrew Allan, York district, S. C.
John Aikman, New York
John Archer, do
George Alen, near Pittsburgh
David Alexander, do
Robert Agnew, do

B

Rev. William Blackstock, York district, South Carolina
Rev. Joseph Brady, Carlisle
William Brydon, Philadelphia
John Brandon, Esq. High Sheriff, Lygonier Valley, Westmoreland County, Penn.
Robert Bane, Rockbridge Co. Vir.
William Bane, do
Samuel Bane, do
George Brandling, do
Henry Bell, Ohio County, Vir.
Robert Bell, do
James Bell, do
Benjamin Biggs, do
John Beats, York County, Penn.
Andrew Brewes, do
John Barland, Carlisle
Wm. Berry, Miller's Run, W. Co.
John Boden, do
Robert Blake, New York
David Bower, Peter's Creek, Washington County, Penn.
Charles Baitt, Buffaloe, do
George Bealy, do
John Brown, Alleghany County
Charles Bonner, do
Matthew Bowland, Chartiers, Washington County, Penn.
James Buchanan, do

THE ABSURDITY AND PERFIDY OF ALL AUTHORITATIVE TOLERATION OF GROSS HERESY, BLASPHEMY, IDOLATRY, POPERY, IN BRITAIN

In two letters to a friend in which the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith relative to Toleration of a False Religion, and the power of the civil magistrate about sacred matters; and the nature, origin, ends and obligation of the National Covenant and Solemn League are candidly represented and defended.

John Brown of Haddington

(1797, 1803 edition, 213 pages)

Here Brown deals with ***three major Reformation attainments*** (anti-tolerationism, establishmentarianism and the obligations of lawful covenants as they biblically bind posterity) that Satan has always been especially concerned to overthrow — in every major demonic move to open the floodgates of lawlessness, anarchy and misrule. Fletcher, in the preface to the 1797 edition, relates this truth as it comes to bear on various religious professors, stating, "**Papists were enemies to our covenants because they were a standard lifted up against their system of abominable idolatries. Episcopalians were enemies to them, because they were a standard lifted up against their anti-scriptural church-officers and inventions of men in the worship of God. Some Presbyterians are enemies to them in our day through ignorance of their nature and ends; and others through fear of being too strictly bound to their duty**" (Cited in Johnston, *Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, p. 486).

It is also interesting to note the long list of backsliders and heretics that often oppose one or more of these points. "The ancient **Donatists**, a sect of **Arian separatists**, who appeared about the beginning of the 4th Century, seem to have been among the first who held out these opinions to the Christian world. Feeling the weight of the arm of power for their schismatical practices, by way of reprisal, they stript the magistrate of all power in religion;—maintaining that he had no more power about religious matters than any private person, and refusing him the right of suppressing the propagators of doctrines different from those professed by the Church, or the observers of a different form of worship. From them the **German Anabaptists** adopted the same views. Then the **Socinians** (i.e. an early form of **Scripture-denying liberals**—RB) and remonstrant **Arminians**, whenever the magistrate ceased to patronize their cause. The **English Independents** during the time of the Long Parliament were the zealous supporters of the same opinions. In their rage for liberty of conscience, they formed the strongest **opposition in the Westminster Assembly** which the Presbyterians had to encounter. Through their influence that venerable body was much embarrassed (hindered—RB) in their proceeding; and by their means (in collusion with that "Judas of the Covenant," **Cromwell**—RB), certain passages of the Confession of Faith never obtained the ratification of the English Parliament. The **English Dissenters** of the present age are generally in the same views, especially the **Socinians**, the **Arians**, and the **Quakers**, who have most to dread from the Laws of the Land against their blasphemies. And who knows not that the high reputation of **Mr. Locke** as a Philosopher... has given

these opinions such an air of respectability, that many youth in the Universities have been thereby inclined to embrace them?" (Preface, pp. vi-vii).

In our day the tree of toleration (and the anti-Scriptural principles which logically grow out of it) has spread its branches in ways that could have never been envisioned by those that took the first steps away from biblical and covenanted uniformity. What Brown is fighting against here is an error so foundational that when left unchecked it permeates all of society, cutting out the foundational roots that are necessary for all national Reformations. And "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3). Furthermore, as the preface notes ***"liberty of conscience and of opinion" are "the great idols of the day."*** Here Brown takes out his covenantal hammer and smashes these idols with an inconoclastic zeal worthy of our earlier Reformed forefathers. This book is especially useful in answering the persistent fear and questions that always arise when these old Reformed views are discussed: that is, the questions dealing with religious persecution. **Brown spends much time in clearing the Westminster Divines of such false charges**, while also setting these controversial Reformed teachings on a thoroughly biblical foundation.

Interestingly, in the section defending ***the continuing obligation of the National and Solemn League and Covenant, we also note that the Westminster Assembly considered the Solemn League and Covenant an "everlasting covenant."*** Brown cites the following as proof, "That the body of the English nation also swore the Solemn League and Covenant, is manifest. The Westminster Assembly and English Parliament, affirm, 'The honourable house of Parliament, the Assembly of Divines, the renowned city of London, and multitudes of other persons of all ranks and quality in this nation, and the whole body of Scotland, have all sworn it, rejoicing at the oath so graciously seconded from heaven. God will, doubtless, stand by all those, who with singleness of heart shall now enter into an **everlasting covenant** with the Lord'" (p. 161, emphasis added). The footnote tells us that the words Brown was quoting were taken from "Exhortation to take the Covenant, February, 1644."

Brown also includes a helpful section on a point some **modern day malignants are once again attempting to use to overthrow the biblical attainments of the covenanted Reformation.** This section shows that the "(t)he intrinsic obligation of promises, oaths, vows, and covenants which constitutes their very essence or essential form, is totally and manifestly distinct from the obligation of the law of God in many respects" (p. 120, emphasis added).

Finally, we cite a portion of Brown's **dying testimony** to his children given in the introduction (p. xix). Such testimonies, from notable Christian leaders, often contain singularly pertinent charges to their hearers. (For another notable example of this see James Renwick's dying testimony, as he was about to be **martyred for his adherence to the Solemn League and Covenant**, when he recounts what was later to become most of the terms of communion in Covenanted Presbyterian churches. This testimony can be found in Thompson's *A Cloud of Witnesses for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ Being the Last Speeches and Testimonies of those Who Have Suffered for the Truth in Scotland Since... 1680*). Here are Brown's dying words to his children: **"'Adhere constantly, cordially and honestly to the Covenanted Principles of the Church of Scotland, and to that Testimony which hath been lifted up for them. I fear a generation is rising up which will endeavour silently,' (O how prophetic!) 'to let slip these matters, as if they were ashamed to hold them fast, or even to speak of them (as with many "reformed" publishers and preachers today, who dare not touch the topics Brown deals with in this book—RB). May the Lord forbid that any of you should ever enter into this confederacy against Jesus Christ and his cause! This from a dying father and minister, and a witness for Christ' (Signed) 'John Brown.'"**

If you have the ***courage to compare the original Reformed faith with that which is often promoted under its name today*** *(and in many ways the old Reformed faith bears little resemblance to the "new light" Reformers and innovators of our day), then this is an ideal book to obtain and study.*

(Bound photocopy) $49.95-80%=9.99 (Canadian funds)
(Hardcover photocopy) $19.00 (Canadian funds)

STILL WATERS REVIVAL BOOKS

(Rare and hard to find Reformation resources at great discounts!) Email: swrb@connect.ab.ca
Home page at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/ (Many FREE books here too!)
Contact us today for your FREE mail-order catalogue!
4710-37A Ave., Edmonton, AB, Canada T6L 3T5
Voice: (403) 450-3730 Fax: (403) 465-0237

Calvin, Close Communion and the Coming Reformation

(A Book Review of *Alexander and Rufus; or a Series of Dialogues on Church Communion, in Two Parts. Part 1: Vindication of Scriptural Church Communion in Opposition to Latitudinarian Schemes. Part 2: Defence of the Communion Maintained in the Secession Church* by John Anderson [1862])

by Reg Barrow © 1996

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

John Calvin listed the doctrine of the sacraments as the third most important element, in cataloguing his four major areas of concern, regarding Christianity and the ecclesiastical Reformation of his day, writing,

> If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity: this is, a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name Christians, our profession is empty and vain. After these come the sacraments and the government of the church... (*The Necessity of Reforming the Church* [Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1544, reprinted 1995], p. 15).

Second Reformation thought on church communion is clearly echoed in the words of the Reformed Presbytery, in 1876, when they declared,

> In this age of boasted charity, but really 'detestable neutrality and indifferency,' it is an irksome and painful task, but a duty, thus to bear testimony against churches, in which are to be found, no doubt, many precious sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. But personal piety never was, nor possibly can be, the condition of fellowship in the visible church. To think so, and say so, is one of the most popular delusions of the present day. It puts the supposed pious man, speaking his experience, in the place of God, speaking his sovereign will in the Bible. This is the height of impiety. (*Act, Declaration, and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation*, p. 175)

These testimonies remain true today (and maybe even more so), as the close communion doctrine of the Reformation continues to be much misunderstood and even more maligned. The false ecumenists (and theological egalitarians and pluralists) of our day continue to batter away at this *foundation of the Reformation doctrine of the church* — while even many of those that profess to be the heirs of the Reformation are found to be ignorant regarding this point. Any doctrine of communion which does not take into account the biblical command to "be of one mind" (cf. Rom. 15:6, 2 Cor. 13:11, Phil. 1:27, Phil. 2:2, 1 Pet. 3:8) at a corporate, visible level is skewed from the beginning. In short, latitudinarian schemes of open communion (which only include the so-called "essentials" of the faith) are schismatic (i.e. if we do not confuse "schism" with "separation").

As Dodson notes, in his *Open Letter to an RPCNA Elder*, one should not

> confuse 'schism' with 'separation.' They are not the same thing. John Brown, of Haddington, states, 'that schism in scripture, chiefly, if not solely, represents alienation of affection, and disagreement among those who continue the same joint attendance on the ordinances of the gospel,' 1 Cor. 12:25; 1:10. Augustine said, 'It is not a different faith makes schismatics, but a broken society of communion.' In no place, in the Bible, does the word 'schism' appear to signify 'visible separation.' **Error in doctrine, corruption in worship and tyranny in discipline, render separation unavoidable, *to escape the sin of schism.*** Your conception of what constitutes 'schism' is that of Rome. If 'schism' is 'separation;' and 'There is no precedent for schism [re: separation] in the Bible;' then, on what basis did Protestants leave Rome? Every Reformer owned that Rome is, in some sense, a Church of Christ. After all, that man of sin is seated in the 'temple of God,' as they taught (emphasis added).

Schismatic schemes promoting open communion (of which paedocommunion is presently at the head), attempt to "dumb down" (to a greater or lesser degree) the requirements for partaking at the Lord's table. Loose and latitudinarian schemes of communion lead to churches that stand for little — or nothing — over time; while a Scripturally regulated close communion tends to the exact opposite end. Anderson makes this very point in his preface to this book, "corruption is the native consequence of latitudinarian schemes, (while) scriptural order in sacramental communion tends to make the visible church a heaven on earth to the faithful, terrible as an army with banners to her ene-

mies, and to her King and Head for a name, for a praise and for glory."

If you love the purity and peace of Christ's church and agree with the words of John Calvin, when he wrote, "We are only contending about the true and lawful constitution of the church, required in the communion not only of the sacraments (which are the signs of profession) but also especially of doctrine" (*Institutes*, 4.2.12), then you will find a meaty meal in *Alexander and Rufus* — for the author not only deals with the larger questions related to church communion, but also weaves into the fabric of this book many specific threads relating to practical applications and doctrinal controversies. Moreover, notwithstanding a couple of peculiar doctrinal foibles originating from the Seceder camp, in opposition to the Covenanters (especially regarding civil government and some points of the law), a plethora of subjects relative to the Reformed view of communion, church union, testimony-bearing, etc., are all dealt with here — and these points are given the kind of attention (along with Scriptural and historical accuracy) that will be greatly appreciated among those familiar with the precise views of the "old dissenters" of Scottish origin.

Additionally, Anderson is not shy about proclaiming the fact that Scripture teaches that anti-Calvinists (i.e. Romanists, Pelagians, Arminians, Amyraldians, etc.), anti-paedobaptists, anti-regulativists, and a host of others that deny the apostolic faith (at points related to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the church), should be barred from the table of the Lord (arguing *a fortiori* from Math. 5:23-24); but, he is also careful to distinguish between the Popish and Prelatical views of excommunication (which equate excommunication with a sentence to hell) and the Calvinistic view which recognizes that those who are among **the elect** can at times come under the sentence of excommunication. For example, Greg Price has noted (in a forthcoming book on the visible church and separation) that "Calvin distinguishes between **anathema** and **excommunication**. The former sentences one to hell, the latter puts one outside the fellowship of the church" (cf. Calvin's *Institutes* 4.12.10). Samuel Rutherford makes the same distinction in his *Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church Discipline* (1658) commenting on 1 Cor. 16:22 and 1 Cor. 5, as does James Fraser of Brae, on page 210, in *The Lawfulness and Duty or Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches* (1744).

It is also not without significance that Anderson's contendings can be seen to be nothing more than classic second Reformation teaching regarding fencing the Lord's table. Samuel Rutherford comments,

> Because the Churches take not care, that Ministers be savoury and gracious; from Steermen all Apostasie and rottenness begin. O if the Lord would arise and purge his House in Scotland! As for Church-members, they ought to be holy; and though all baptized be *actu primo* members, yet such as remain habitually ignorant after admonition, are to be cast out, and though they be not cast out certainly, as paralytick or rottened members cannot discharge the functions of life: So those that are scandalous, ignorant, malignant, unsound in faith, lose their rights of Suffrages in election of Officers, and are to be debarred from the Seals. Nor can we defend our sinful practise in this: it were our wisdom to repent of our taking in the Malignant party, who shed the blood of the people of God, and obstructed the work of God, into places of Trust in the Church State, and the Army, contrary to our Covenants, they continuing still Enemies (*Survey of the Survey...*, p. 373).

This is confirmed throughout *The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, From the Year 1638 to the Year 1649 Inclusive*. Here is a partial lists of offences recorded in *The Acts...* for which people were disciplined: innovations in worship; neglecting daily family worship; Sabbath breaking; covenant refusing, covenant breaking and speaking against the national covenants; Arminianism; celebrating man-ordained holydays (e.g. Christmass); familiar fellowship with those excommunicated; promoting, countenancing, hearing or accepting false church government and unlawful ministers (whether Popish, Episcopal or sectarian [Independent]); slander; contumacy, etc.

Furthermore, recognizing Calvin's (biblical) distinctions concerning the **visible church** (distinguishing between the visible church as to **essence** and the visible as to **constitution**, cf. Calvin's *Institutes* 4.2.12), Anderson writes:

> The catholic church comprehends all that profess the true religion. There is a lawful and necessary division of it into sections in respect of local situation. But when a number of people, bearing the Christian name, combine together as a distinct society, for the purpose of maintaining and propagating doctrines and practices, which, instead of belonging to the true religion, are contrary to it; they ought not, considered as such a combination, to be called a lawful section of the catholic church (i.e. constitutionally, according to their public character and profession—RB). It is not denied, that they belong to the catholic church (in as far as they, as in-

dividuals, profess the truth—RB); but it is denied, that there ought to be any such section or division in it. Thus, there ought to be no section of the catholic church, having for the peculiar end of its distinct subsistence, the support of episcopal hierarchy, unknown in the Scripture, of the propagation of antipaedobaptism, or of anti-scriptural doctrine, in opposition to that of God's election, redemption, effectual calling and the conservation of his people, as delivered in the scripture; or for the support of ways and means of divine worship not found in Scripture. If the catholic visible church were brought to a suitable discharge of her duty, she would abolish all such sections. But no society ought to be called such an unlawful section, while it can be shown that it subsists as a separate society for no other end, than for the maintaining of something in the doctrine, worship or government of the church which belongs to the Christian religion as delivered in the word of God, or for exhibiting a testimony against prevailing errors and corruptions which the scripture requires the catholic church to condemn. Such a profession of any party of Christians is no sectarian profession; and a union with them is not a sectarian, but properly a Christian union; and, being cordial and sincere, is a union in Christ; and communion upon the ground of this union is truly Christian communion. On the other hand, however much of our holy religion any body of Christians hold in common with others, and however many of them we may charitably judge to be saints, yet while their distinguishing profession is contrary to the word of God, communion with them, as a body so distinguished, **is sectarian communion**; as it implies a union with them in that which ought to be rejected by the whole catholic church (pp. 10-11, emphasis added).

Furthermore, commenting on "Alexander's" latitudinarian contention that Calvin would have tolerated Arminians and idolaters at the Lord's table (which together comprise the two main areas of Calvin's concern for ecclesiastical Reformation, as cited at the head of this summary), "Rufus" replies,

> Considering that the Arminian scheme includes some of the most pernicious errors of Popery, how reproachful it is to the memory of Calvin, to call such a base proposal, his plan revived and prosecuted? Did Mr. Calvin ever speak of independent churches in the one church of Christ? Or of promoting union, by holding sacramental communion with the professed teachers of false doctrine, as every Arminian teacher is, or with the professed defenders of superstition in the worship of God? By no means (p. 159).

Moreover, it is a well documented fact that the Genevan Presbytery of Calvin's day, in 1536, sought to excommunicate anyone who would not swear an oath to uphold the Reformed doctrine as it was set forth in their *Confession of Faith.*

T.H.L. Parker writes,

> Since the evangelical faith had only recently been preached in the city, and there were still many Romanists, the ministers also urged excommunication on the grounds of failure to confess the faith. *The Confession of faith, which all the citizens and inhabitants of Geneva... must promise to keep and to hold* had been presented to the Council on 10 November 1536. Let the members of the Council be the first to subscribe and then the citizens, "in order to recognize those in harmony with the Gospel and those loving rather to be of the kingdom of the pope than of the kingdom of Jesus Christ." Those who would not subscribe were to be excommunicated (*John Calvin: A Biography*, p. 63).

Furthermore, those who would not submit to "Calvin's" close communion were not only proceeded against with negative ecclesiastical sanctions, but they came under negative civil sanctions also.

Mike Wagner, in *Up From Reconstructionism*, states,

> John Calvin, during the First Reformation, showed that he supported the concept of Covenanted Reformation by requiring all the residents of Geneva to take an oath in support of the Reformation. The "Register of the Council of 24" of Geneva notes as follows:
>
> 12 November 1537. It was reported that yesterday the people who had not yet made their oath to the reformation were asked to do so, street by street; whilst many came, many others did not do so. No one came from the German quarter. It was decided that they should be commanded to leave the city if they did not wish to swear to the reformation (Johnston, Pamela, and Bob Scribner. 1993. *The Reformation in Germany and Switzerland*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 138).

Now, it should be obvious to those who know the commandments of God that an honest man cannot swear an oath to uphold a confession that he does not believe. To do so, even if the man disagrees with only one point of the confession, is to violate both the third and ninth commandments — and to play the Jesuit (see the *Westminster Larger Catechism* on the duties required and the sins forbidden concerning the third and ninth commandments; these can be found as questions and answers 112, 113, 144, and 145). Such false swearing is also, by definition, perjury (I wonder how many perjured officers reside in Presbyterian and Reformed churches today?). To encourage others to so swear is subornation to perjury. These are all serious sins in themselves and all worthy of excommunication and civil penalties — as the Genevan Reformers rightly taught and practiced.

In *Alexander and Rufus* close communion is also shown (as above) to be God's ordained method of promoting truth, unity and Reformation; not destroying it, as the ignorant and scandalous claim,

> The term sectarian, the favorite watch-word of this author, tends to divert the attention from the matter in dispute. The question is, whether a church's refusing to have sacramental communion with such as openly avow their opposition to one or more articles of her scriptural profession has such effects as are now mentioned? Does this refusal break up the unity of the church at large? By no means. The truths of God's word constitute the bond of unity in the catholic church; so far as they are publicly professed and preserved in the doctrine, worship, and government of the several particular churches. Hence it is evident, that what breaks up the peace of the catholic church, is not the faithfulness of particular churches in refusing, but their laxness in granting sacramental communion to the avowed opposers of undoubted truths of God's word, as exhibited in the public profession of any of the churches, every instance of this laxness tending to weaken the bond of their union. Does refusing sacramental communion with the avowed opposers of the truths of God, publicly professed by a particular church, chill the warmth of love to the catholic church? surely no: for it is manifestly the interest of the catholic church that every particular church should hold these truths in her public profession, and not tolerate opposition to them in her communion. Hence it must give sincere pleasure to a lover of the catholic church to see a particular church uniformly faithful in refusing church communion to open opposers of any one of the truths of God contained in her public profession... Does the faithfulness of a particular church, in refusing to have sacramental communion with the open opposers of any article of her scriptural profession, hinder her from using any means appointed in the word of God for promoting his spiritual kingdom? This is so far from being the case, that this refusal is supposed and implied in the use of several proper means for that end; such as, a church's contending for the whole truth exhibited in her public profession; the judicial assertion of the truths of God's word, and the judicial condemnation of the contrary errors; committing the word to faithful men, who will teach others the whole truth and nothing but the truth, according to the public profession or testimony of the church, in due subordination to the holy scriptures; recognising the solemn engagements, which the church has come under to preserve whatever measure of reformation has been attained. These means, which are certainly appointed in the word of God, cannot be sincerely used by any particular church, unless she be careful, that such as are avowed and obstinate opposers of any article of her scriptural profession, may not be received into, or continued in her communion. Whilst these means, of our Lord's appointment, are willfully neglected, we have little ground to expect the Divine blessing on such other means as men may pretend, to use for the advancement of his spiritual kingdom (pp. 92-93).

To see how closely this mirrors Calvin's teaching, see pages 126 to 135 in *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (Presbyterian Heritage Publications' edition).

Anderson also does an excellent job concerning: Calvin's plan for promoting a union among the churches (p. 151ff.); the place of confessions and confessional subscription (pp. 85, 179); covenanting (p. 358-384); separation (p. 92, 132); worship (pp. 10-13, 87, 107, 142, 155, 161-164, 456ff., etc.); the marks of the church (p. 132ff.); uniformity (pp. 7, 103, 168, 205); the Westminster Assembly (p. 169ff); the Dutch views (158f.); distinctions between essentials and non-essentials (p. 168); the so-called "glorious revolution" of 1688 (p. 263); the French Reformed churches (p. 156); the covenanted Reformation (p. 253); discipline (p. 103); attainments (pp. 11, 93, 137, 162ff., 206, etc.); the government of the church (p. 123); the so-called "Apostle's creed" (pp. 100-104); the Belgic Confession (pp. 135-138); councils in the ancient church (p. 104); the Donatists (p. 112); the forsaking of sin, false doctrine, and false teachers (pp. 92, 132); occasional hearing (p. 83); Owen against open communion (p. 207); sectarianism (p. 92); and much, much more. On the topic of church and sacramental communion you are unlikely to find many other books with as much solid information. Recommended for advanced study only. Indexed, 518 pages.

FORMAT AND PRICE: (Rare bound photocopy) $99.95-80%=$19.99 (Canadian funds, plus 13% postage & handling).

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1. *Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution Church...* by the Andrew Clarkson
2. *Concerning Close Communion* by W.J. McKnight
3. *An Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion, Adopted by the Community of Dissenters, etc.* by the Reformed Presbytery
4. *Close Communion* by R.J. George
5. *A Modest Apology for the Conduct of Seceders, in Refusing to Join in Christian Communion with Sectarians, Latitudinarians, etc. Who Have Departed from the Purity of Reformation Once Attained to in these Kingdoms* by Anonymous

This is *Reformation History Notes* number 2, issued Dec. 7, 1996.

Still Waters Revival Books

4710-37A Ave., Edmonton, AB, Canada T6L 3T5 (Reformation resources at great discounts!)
E-mail: swrb@connect.ab.ca Home page at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/ (FREE BOOKS here too!)
***Contact us today for your FREE mail-order catalogue!* Permission is granted (in fact we encourage it!) to copy and distribute this newsletter only if the entire article is reproduced, including all credits.**

War Against the Idols

The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin

by Carlos M. N. Eire

The destruction of an image.

THE ATTACKS of Iconoclasts upon Popish images have often been regarded as the activities of extremists on the fringe of the Protestant Reformation. Yet, the Reformation was not merely a struggle over the doctrine of justification; it was a battle for the proper worship of the living God. Carlos Eire demonstrates that the Continental Reformers issued a preeminent call to purge Romish corruptions from worship; and, thus, iconoclasm was an integral part of the program to Reform worship.

Eire gives special attention to the writings of John Calvin, showing that the call for simple, biblical worship was central to Calvin's message – not a peripheral matter. "Calvin considered the struggle against idolatry to be an unending task, and thought the situation of sixteenth-century evangelicals paralleled that of the ancient Israelites: They were the chosen few, surrounded by peoples immersed in idolatry and superstition. Like their Old Testament forebears, sixteenth-century Reformed Christians had to be prepared to deal with the contagion of idolatry. Even in a Reformed community, Calvin insisted, it was necessary to speak to the faithful about the corruption around them, lest they become complacent. As had been the case with the Israelites, purity of worship was expected to be the primary response to the covenant between God and his people; and for Calvin the true Christian church always had to be reminded of the fact that it had been rescued from idolatry. This means, of course, that Calvin regarded the Church as a sort of real, spiritual nationhood, and that he expected commitment to the purity of the covenant to eclipse any allegiances that opposed it . . . ." (pp. 255-56).

Moreover, Calvin manifests a consistent opposition to the attitude of persons called "Nicodemites" – a term applied to compromisers who said it was permissible to attend the Mass, and other rites of corrupt worship, as long as they did not approve of these corruptions within their hearts. "Calvin was struggling against an attitude, then, that separated interior belief from outward worship" (pp. 256–57). Calvin denounces this ungodly, compromising behavior.

Additionally, Carlos Eire gives attention to the role of the laity in the iconoclast controversies. He shows that the effort to reform worship came not merely from pastors and princes, but also from the vigorous demands of laymen.

The issues treated in *War Against the Idols* are especially timely for our own era. Today, "conservative" Presbyterian churches are being inundated by attempts to modify worship. Some efforts to impose liturgical renewal, which come under the guise of "reform," are actually a return to corrupt ceremonies and rituals espoused by Rome – and rejected by the Reformers. The Popish argument that images are the "books of the laity" is but slightly modified, when professing Protestants advocate the use of "pictures of Jesus" as effective tools for teaching children about God. Other people want to make worship more "relevant" by including drama, dance, and puppet shows. Even among the most "Reformed" churches of our day, crosses are routinely displayed in places of worship. Within the last decade, we have even witnessed the sad spectacle of Presbyterian office-bearers arguing that attendance of the Mass is simply a matter of liberty of conscience.

Yes, contemporary Protestants have drifted far from the teachings of the Reformation. Eire's book helps to restore an historic perspective from which to evaluate modern trends.

Indirectly, this book also does much to dispel false assertions that a sharp distinction existed between the "Continental Reformers" and the Scottish Reformation, over the regulative principle of worship. In our own day, critics have claimed that the Westminster Standards are skewed, due to the influence of the Scottish Commissioners and Puritanism; these critics assert that the Westminster Standards embrace much stricter views of worship than the Continental Reformers. This notion is unfounded. In fact, by Eire's account, the Continental Reformation easily anticipates the doctrine of Westminster: that the law of God requires "the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry" (*Larger Catechism*, #108).

Of course, Lutheranism and Anglicanism embrace much laxer views on worship than either the Swiss or the Scots; but that is not the matter of debate. Although it is not a part of Eire's thesis to prove the point, his book illustrates the essential unity between the Swiss and the Scots, between Geneva and Westminster, as regards the scriptural law of worship.

Eire includes a discussion of the magistrate's role in reform. He also treats the right of subjects to resist tyranny, especially when tyrants seek to impose corrupt worship upon their subjects.

This is a remarkable book. Readers may quibble with a few scattered comments by the author. But on the whole, it is obvious that Eire has proven his main points. Another reviewer has written: "Iconoclasm has long been regarded merely as an unfortunate early outburst, a side-effect as it were of the Reformation in the cities. Eire has now raised it to the level of those other basic tenets which marked both the liberating strength and the disciplining rigor of the reformed tradition."

War Against the Idols contains a clear structure, as listed in the table of contents. The book contains a short index. This is a scholarly volume. Pastors and educated laymen will be able to read the main text with great profit. There are numerous footnotes, often in French or German, which provide additional resources for those given to academic pursuits.

Carlos M. N. Eire is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia.

Available from:
Still Waters Revival Books
4710-37A Ave., Edmonton, AB, Canada T6L 3T5
(Reformation resources at great discounts!) E-mail: swrb@connect.ab.ca
Home page at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/ (FREE BOOKS here too!)
Contact us today for your FREE mail-order catalogue! (403) 450-3730